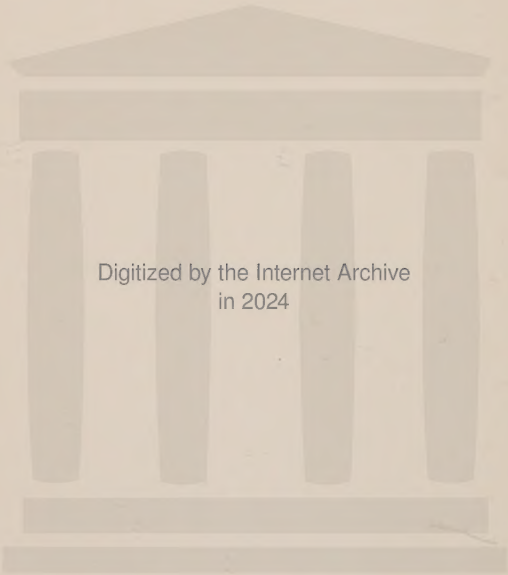
LITTLE MASTERPIECES OF WIT AND HUMOR

VOLUME II

Little Masterpieces of
American Wit and Humor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Little Masterpieces of American Wit and Humor

Edited by Thomas L. Masson

VOLUME II

By

Bret Harte
Sol Smith
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James Russell Lowell
Mary Mapes Dodge
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and others

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SOL SMITH

A BULLY BOAT AND A BRAG CAPTAIN

A Story of Steamboat Life on the Mississippi

DOES any one remember the *Caravan?* She was what would now be considered a slow boat—*then* (1827) she was regularly advertised as the "fast running," etc. Her regular trips from New Orleans to Natchez were usually made in from six to eight days; a trip made by her in five days was considered remarkable. A voyage from New Orleans to Vicksburg and back, including stoppages, generally entitled the officers and crew to a month's wages. Whether the *Caravan* ever achieved the feat of a voyage to the Falls (Louisville) I have never learned; if she did, she must have "had a *time* of it!"

It was my fate to take passage in this boat. The Captain was a good-natured, easy-going man, careful of the comfort of his passengers, and exceedingly fond of the *game of brag.* We had been out a little more than five days, and we were in hopes of seeing the bluffs of Natchez on the next day. Our wood was getting low, and night coming on. The pilot on duty *above* (the other pilot held three aces at the time, and was just calling out the Captain, who "went it strong" on three kings) sent down word that the mate

had reported the stock of wood reduced to half a cord. The worthy Captain excused himself to the pilot whose watch was *below* and the two passengers who made up the party, and hurried to the deck, where he soon discovered by the landmarks that we were about half a mile from a woodyard, which he said was situated "right round yonder point." "But," muttered the Captain, "I don't much like to take wood of the yellow-faced old scoundrel who owns it — he always charges a quarter of a dollar more than any one else; however, there's no other chance." The boat was pushed to her utmost, and in a little less than an hour, when our fuel was about giving out, we made the point, and our cables were out and fastened to trees alongside of a good-sized woodpile.

"Hallo, Colonel! How d'ye sell your wood *this* time?"

A yellow-faced old gentleman, with a two-weeks' beard, strings over his shoulders holding up to his armpits a pair of copperas-colored linsey-woolsey pants, the legs of which reached a very little below the knee; shoes without stockings; a faded broad-brimmed hat, which had once been black, and a pipe in his mouth — casting a glance at the empty guards of our boat and uttering a grunt as he rose from fastening our "spring line," answered:

"Why, Capting, we must charge you *three and a quarter* THIS *time*."

"The d——l!" replied the Captain — (captains

did swear a little in those days); "what's the odd *quarter* for, I should like to know? You only charged me *three* as I went down."

"Why, Capting," drawled out the wood merchant, with a sort of leer on his yellow countenance, which clearly indicated that his wood was as good as sold, "wood's riz since you went down two weeks ago; besides, you are awar that you very seldom stop going *down* — when you're going *up* you're sometimes obleeged to give me a call, becaze the current's aginst you, and there's no other woodyard for nine miles ahead! and if you happen to be nearly out of fooel, why ——"

"Well, well," interrupted the Captain, "we'll take a few cords under the circumstances," and he returned to his game of brag.

In about half an hour we felt the *Caravan* commence paddling again. Supper was over, and I retired to my upper berth, situated alongside and overlooking the brag-table, where the Captain was deeply engaged, having now the *other* pilot as his principal opponent. We jogged on quietly — and seemed to be going at a good rate.

"How does that wood burn?" inquired the Captain of the mate, who was looking on at the game.

"'Tisn't of much account, I reckon," answered the mate; "it's cotton-wood, and most of it green at that."

"Well, Thompson—(Three aces again, stranger — I'll take that X and the small change, if you

please. It's your deal—Thompson, I say, we'd better take three or four cords at the next wood yard—it can't be more than six miles from here—(Two aces and a bragger, with the age! Hand over those V's)."

The game went on, and the paddles kept moving. At eleven o'clock it was reported to the Captain that we were nearing the woodyard, the light being distinctly seen by the pilot on duty.

"Head her in shore, then, and take in six cords if it's good—see to it, Thompson; I can't very well leave the game now—it's getting right warm! This pilot's beating us all to smash."

The wooding completed, we paddled on again. The Captain seemed somewhat vexed when the mate informed him that the price was the same as at the last woodyard—*three and a quarter*; but soon again became interested in the game.

From my upper berth (there were no state-rooms *then*) I could observe the movements of the players. All the contention appeared to be between the Captain and the pilots (the latter personages took it turn and turn about, steering and playing brag), *one* of them almost invariably winning, while the two passengers merely went through the ceremony of dealing, cutting, and paying up their "anties." They were anxious to *learn the game*—and they *did* learn it! Once in a while, indeed, seeing they had two aces and a bragger, they would venture a bet of five or ten

dollars, but they were always compelled to back out before the tremendous bragging of the Captain or pilot—or if they did venture to "call out" on "two bullets and a bragger," they had the mortification to find one of the officers had the same kind of a hand, and were *more venerable!* Still, with all these disadvantages, they continued playing—they wanted to learn the game.

At two o'clock the Captain asked the mate how we were getting on.

"Oh, pretty glibly, sir," replied the mate; "we can scarcely tell what headway we *are* making, for we are obliged to keep the middle of the river, and there is the shadow of a fog rising. This wood seems rather better than that we took in at Yellow-Face's, but we're nearly out again, and must be looking out for more. I saw a light just ahead on the right—shall we hail?"

"Yes, yes," replied the Captain; "ring the bell and ask 'em what's the price of wood up here. (I've got you again; here's double kings.)"

I heard the bell and the pilot's hail, "What's *your* price for wood?"

A youthful voice on the shore answered, "Three *and* a quarter!"

"D——nèt!" ejaculated the Captain, who had just lost the price of two cords to the pilot—the strangers suffering *some* at the same time—"three and a quarter again! Are we *never* to get to a cheaper country? (Deal, sir, if you please; better luck next time.)"

The other pilot's voice was again heard on deck—

"How much *have* you?"

"Only about ten cords, sir," was the reply of the youthful salesman.

The Captain here told Thompson to take six cords, which would last till daylight—and again turned his attention to the game.

The pilots here changed places. *When did they sleep?*

Wood taken in, the *Caravan* again took her place in the middle of the stream, paddling on as usual.

Day at length dawned. The brag-party broke up and settlements were being made, during which operations the Captain's bragging propensities were exercised in cracking up the speed of his boat, which, by his reckoning, must have made at least sixty miles, and *would* have made many more if he could have procured good wood. It appears the two passengers, in their first lesson, had incidentally lost one hundred and twenty dollars. The Captain, as he rose to see about taking in some *good* wood, which he felt sure of obtaining now that he had got above the level country, winked at his opponent, the pilot, with whom he had been on very bad terms during the progress of the game, and said, in an undertone, "Forty apiece for you and I and James" [the other pilot] "is not bad for one night."

I had risen and went out with the Captain, to

enjoy a view of the bluffs. There was just fog enough to prevent the vision taking in more than sixty yards—so I was disappointed in *my* expectation. We were nearing the shore for the purpose of looking for wood, the banks being invisible from the middle of the river.

"There it is!" exclaimed the Captain; "stop her!" Ding-—ding—ding! went the big bell, and the Captain hailed:

"Hallo! the woodyard!"

"Hallo yourself!" answered a squeaking female voice, which came from a woman with a petticoat over her shoulders in place of a shawl.

"What's the price of wood?"

"I think you ought to know the price by this time," answered the old lady in the petticoat; "it's three and a qua-a-rter! and now you know it."

"Three and the d——l!" broke in the Captain. "What, have you raised on *your* wood, too? I'll give you *three*, and not a cent more."

"Well," replied the petticoat, "here comes the old man—*he'll* talk to you."

And, sure enough, out crept from the cottage the veritable faded hat, copperas-colored pants, yellow countenance and two weeks' beard we had seen the night before, and the same voice we had heard regulating the price of cotton-wood squeaked out the following sentence, accompanied by the same leer of the same yellow countenance:

"Why, darn it all, Capting, there is but three

or four cords left, and *since it's you*, I don't care if I do let you have it for *three—as you 're a good customer!*"

After a quick glance at the landmarks around, the Captain bolted, and turned in to take some rest.

The fact became apparent—the reader will probably have discovered it some time since—that *we had been wooding all night at the same woodyard!*

THE DOG AND THE BEES

A DOG being very much annoyed by bees, ran quite accidentally into an empty barrel lying on the ground, and looking out at the bung-hole, addressed his tormentors thus:

"Had you been temperate, stinging me only one at a time, you might have got a good deal of fun out of me. As it is, you have driven me into a secure retreat; for I can snap you up as fast as you come in through the bung-hole. Learn from this the folly of intemperate zeal."

When he had concluded, he awaited a reply. There was n't any reply; for the bees had never gone near the bung-hole; they went in the same way as he did, and made it very warm for him.

The lesson of this fable is that one cannot stick to his pure reason while quarreling with bees.

AMBROSE BIERCE.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

DISLIKES

I WANT it to be understood that I consider that a certain number of persons are at liberty to dislike me peremptorily, without showing cause, and that they give no offense whatever in so doing.

If I did not cheerfully acquiesce in this sentiment toward myself on the part of others, I should not feel at liberty to indulge my own aversions. I try to cultivate a Christian feeling to all my fellow-creatures, but inasmuch as I must also respect truth and honesty, I confess to myself a certain number of inalienable dislikes and prejudices, some of which may possibly be shared by others. Some of these are purely instinctive; for others I can assign a reason. Our likes and dislikes play so important a part in the order of things that it is well to see on what they are founded.

There are persons I meet occasionally who are too intelligent by half for my liking. They know my thoughts beforehand, and tell me what I was going to say. Of course they are masters of all my knowledge, and a good deal besides; have read all the books I have read, and in later editions; have had all the experiences I have

been through, and more, too. In my private opinion, every mother's son of them will lie at any time rather than confess ignorance.

I have a kind of dread, rather than hatred, of persons with a large excess of vitality—great feeders, great laughers, great story-tellers, who come sweeping over their company with a huge tidal wave of animal spirits and boisterous merriment. I have pretty good spirits myself, and enjoy a little mild pleasantry, but I am oppressed and extinguished by these great lusty, noisy creatures, and feel as if I were a mute at a funeral when they get into full blast.

I cannot get along much better with those drooping, languid people, whose vitality falls short as much as that of the others is in excess. I have not life enough for two; I wish I had. It is not very enlivening to meet a fellow-creature whose expression and accents say, "You are the hair that breaks the camel's back of my endurance; you are the last drop that makes my cup of woe run over"; persons whose heads drop on one side like those of toothless infants; whose voices recall the tones in which our old snuffling choir used to wail out the verse of

"Life is the time to serve the Lord."

There is another style which does not captivate me. I recognize an attempt at the *grand manner* now and then, in persons who are well enough in their way, but of no particular importance socially or otherwise. Some family tradition of wealth or distinction is apt to be at the

bottom of it, and it survives all the advantages that used to set it off. I like family pride as well as my neighbors, and respect the high-born fellow-citizen whose progenitors have not worked in their shirt-sleeves for the last two generations full as much as I ought to. But *grandpère oblige;* a person with a known grandfather is too distinguished to find it necessary to put on airs. The few Royal Princes I have happened to know were very easy people to get along with, and had not half the social knee-action I have often seen in the collapsed dowagers who lifted their eyebrows at me in my earlier years.

My heart does not warm as it should do toward the persons, not intimates, who are always *too* glad to see me when we meet by accident, and discover all at once that they have a vast deal to unbosom themselves to me.

There is one blameless person whom I cannot love and have no excuse for hating. It is the innocent fellow-creature, otherwise inoffensive to me, whom I find I have involuntarily joined on turning a corner. I suppose the Mississippi, which was flowing quietly along, minding its own business, hates the Missouri for coming into it all at once with its muddy stream. I suppose the Missouri in like manner hates the Mississippi for diluting with its limpid but insipid current the rich reminiscences of the varied soils through which its own stream has wandered. I will not compare myself to the clear or the turbid current, but I will own that

my heart sinks when I find all of a sudden I am in for a corner confluence, and I cease loving my neighbor as myself until I can get away from him.—*The Poet at the Breakfast Table.*

An Illinois boy was asked to write an essay on Masonry, and here is what he wrote: "King Solomon was a man who lived so many years in the country that he was the whole push. He was an awfully wise man, and one day two women came to him, each holding to the leg of a baby and nearly pulling it in two and each claiming it. And King Solomon wasn't feeling right good and he said: "Why couldn't the brat have been twins and stopped this bother?" And then he called for his machete and was going to Weylerize the poor innocent little baby, and give each woman a piece of it, when the real mother of the baby said: "Stop, Solomon; stay thy hand. Let the old hag have it. If I can't have a whole baby I won't have any." Then Solomon told her to take the baby and go home and wash its face, for he knew it was hers. He told the other woman to go chase herself. King Solomon built Solomon's Temple and was the father of Masons. He had seven hundred wives and three hundred lady friends, and that's why there are so many Masons in the world. My papa says King Solomon was a warm member and I think he was hot stuff myself That is all I know about King Solomon."

G. H. DERBY ("Phœnix," "Squibob")

ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPERS

A YEAR or two since, a weekly paper was started in London called the *Illustrated News*. It was filled with tolerably executed wood-cuts, representing scenes of popular interest; and though perhaps better calculated for the nursery than the reading-room, it took very well in England, where few can read but all can understand pictures, and soon attained immense circulation. As when the inimitable London *Punch* attained its world-wide celebrity, supported by such writers as Thackeray, Jerrold and Hood, would-be funny men on this side of the Atlantic attempted absurd imitations—the *Yankee Doodle*, the *John Donkey*, etc.—which as a matter of course proved miserable failures; so did the success of this illustrated affair inspire our money-loving publishers with hopes of dollars, and soon appeared from Boston, New York, and other places pictorial and illustrated newspapers, teeming with execrable and silly effusions, and filled with the most fearful wood engravings, "got up regardless of expense" or anything else; the contemplation of which was enough to make an artist tear his hair and rend his garments. A Yankee named Gleason, of Boston, published

the first, we believe, calling it *Gleason's Pictorial* (it should have been *Gleason's Pickpocket*) *and Drawing-Room Companion.* In this he presented to his unhappy subscribers views of his house in the country, and his garden, and, for aught we know, of "his ox and his ass, and the stranger within his gates." A detestable invention for transferring daguerreotypes to plates for engraving, having come into notice about this time, was eagerly seized upon by Gleason for further embellishing his catchpenny publication—duplicates and uncalled-for pictures were easily obtained, and many a man has gazed in horror-stricken astonishment on the likeness of a respected friend as a "Portrait of Monroe Edwards," or that of his deceased grandmother in the character of "One of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence." They love pictures in Yankeedom; every tin-peddler has one on his wagon, and an itinerant lecturer can always obtain an audience by sticking up a likeness of some unhappy female, with her ribs laid open in an impossible manner, for public inspection, or a hairless gentleman, with the surface of his head laid out in eligible lots duly marked and numbered. The factory girls of Lowell, the professors of Harvard, all bought the new *Pictorial.* (Professor Webster was reading one when Doctor Parkman called on him on the morning of the murder.) Gleason's speculation was crowned with success, and he bought himself a new cook-

ing stove, and erected an outbuilding on his estate, with both of which he favored the public in a new wood-cut immediately.

Inspired by his success, old Feejee-Mermaid-Tom-Thumb-Woolly-Horse-Joyce-Heth-Barnum forthwith got out another illustrated weekly, with pictures far more extensive, letter-press still sillier, and engravings more miserable, if possible, than Yankee Gleason's. And then we were bored and buffeted by having incredible likenesses of Santa Ana, Queen Victoria and poor old Webster thrust beneath our nose, to that degree that we wished the respected originals had never existed, or that the art of wood engraving had perished, with that of painting on glass.

It was, therefore, with the most intense delight that we saw a notice the other day of the failure and stoppage of *Barnum's Illustrated News;* we rejoiced thereat greatly, and we hope that it will never be revived, and that Gleason will also fail as soon as he conveniently can, and that his trashy pictorial will perish with it.

It must not be supposed from the tenor of these remarks that we are opposed to the publication of a properly conducted and creditably executed illustrated paper. "On the contrary, quite the reverse." We are passionately fond of art ourselves, and we believe that nothing can have a stronger tendency to refinement in society than presenting to the public chaste and elaborate engravings, copies of works of high artistic merit, accompanied by graphic and well-

written essays. It was for the purpose of introducing a paper containing these features to our appreciative community that we have made these introductory remarks, and for the purpose of challenging comparison, and defying competition, that we have criticized so severely the imbecile and ephemeral productions mentioned above. At a vast expenditure of money, time and labor, and after the most incredible and unheard-of exertion on our part, individually, we are at length able to present to the public an illustrated publication of unprecedented merit, containing engravings of exceeding costliness and rare beauty of design, got up on an expensive scale which never has been attempted before in this or any other country.

We furnish our readers this week with the first number, merely promising that the immense expense attending its issue will require a corresponding liberality of patronage on the part of the public, to cause it to be continued.

PHŒNIX'S PICTORIAL
And Second Story Front Room Companion

Vol. 1.] San Diego, Oct. 1, 1853. [No. 1

Portrait of His Royal Highness Prince Albert.—Prince Albert, the son of a gentleman named Coburg, is the husband of Queen Victoria of England, and the father of many of her children. He is the inventor of the celebrated "Albert hat," which has been lately introduced with great effect in the U. S. Army. The Prince is of German extraction, his father being a Dutchman and his mother a Duchess.

Mansion of John Phœnix, Esq., San Diego, California.

House in which Shakespeare was born, in Stratford-on-Avon.

Abbottsford, the residence of Sir Walter Scott, author of Byron's "Pilgrim's Progress," etc.

The Capitol at Washington.

Residence of Governor Bigler, at Benicia, California.

Battle of Lake Erie (*see remarks*, p. 96).

[Page 96.]

The Battle of Lake Erie, of which our Artist presents a spirited engraving, copied from the original painting, by Hannibal Carracci, in the possession of J. P. Haven, Esq., was fought in 1836, on Chesapeake Bay, between the U. S. frigates *Constitution* and *Guerriere* and the British troops, under General Putnam. Our glorious flag, there as everywhere, was victorious, and "Long may it wave, o'er the land of the free, and the home of the *slave*."

Fearful accident on the Camden and Amboy Railroad!! Terrible loss of life!!!

View of the City of San Diego, by Sir Benjamin West.

Interview between Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Duchess of Sutherland, from a group of Statuary, by Clarke Mills.

Bank Account of J. Phœnix, Esq., at Adams and Company, Bankers, San Francisco, California.

Gas works, San Diego *Herald* office.

Steamer Goliah.

View of a California Ranch.—Landseer.

Shell of an oyster once eaten by General Washington; showing the General's manner of opening oysters.

There! This is but a specimen of what we can do if liberally sustained. We wait with anxiety to hear the verdict of the public before proceeding to any further and greater outlays.

Subscription, $5 per annum, payable invariably in advance.

INDUCEMENTS FOR CLUBBING

Twenty copies furnished for one year for fifty cents. Address John Phœnix, Office of the San Diego *Herald*.

SUSAN SIMPSON

Sudden swallows swiftly skimming,
Sunset's slowly spreading shade,
Silvery songsters sweetly singing,
Summer's soothing serenade.

Susan Simpson strolled sedately,
Stifling sobs, suppressing sighs.
Seeing Stephen Slocum, stately
She stopped, showing some surprise.

"Say," said Stephen, "sweetest sigher;
Say, shall Stephen spouseless stay?"
Susan, seeming somewhat shier,
Showed submissiveness straightway.

Summer's season slowly stretches,
Susan Simpson Slocum she—
So she signed some simple sketches—
Soul sought soul successfully.

. . . . . .

Six Septembers Susan swelters;
Six sharp seasons snow supplies;
Susan's satin sofa shelters
Six small Slocums side by side.

MARY MAPES DODGE

MISS MALONY ON THE CHINESE QUESTION

Och! don't be talkin'. Is it howld on, ye say? An' didn't I howld on till the heart of me was clane broke entirely, and me wastin' that thin you could clutch me wid yer two hands! To think o' me toilin' like a nager for the six year I've been in Ameriky—bad luck to the day I iver left the owld counthry, to be bate by the likes o' thim! (faix, an' I'll sit down when I'm ready, so I will, Ann Ryan, an' ye'd better be list'nin' than drawin' your remarks), an' it's mysel', with five good characters from respectable places, would be herdin' wid the haythens. The saints forgive me, but I'd be buried alive soon 'n put up wid a day longer. Sure, an' I was a granehorn not to be lavin' at onct when the missus kim into me kitchen wid her perlaver about the new waiter-man which was brought out from Californy.

"He'll be here the night," says she, "and Kitty, it's meself looks to you to be kind and patient wid him, for he's a furriner," says she, a kind o' looking off. "Sure, an' it's little I'll hinder nor interfare wid him nor any other, mum," says I, a kind o' stiff, for I minded me

how these French waiters, wid their paper collars and brass rings on their fingers, is n't company for no gurril brought up dacint and honest. Och! sorra a bit I knew what was comin' till the missus walked into me kitchen smilin', and says, kind o' schared, "Here's Fing Wing, Kitty, an' you'll have too much sinse to mind his bein' a little strange." Wid that she shoots the doore; and I, misthrusting if I was tidied up sufficient for me fine buy wid his paper collar, looks up and—— Holy fathers! may I never brathe another breath, but there stud a rale haythen Chineser a-grinnin' like he'd just come off a tay-box. If you 'll belave me, the crayture was that yeller it 'ud sicken you to see him; and sorra stich was on him but a black night-gown over his trousers, and the front of 'is head shaved claner nor a copper biler, and a black tail a-hanging down from behind, wid his two feet stook into the heathenesest shoes you ever set eyes on. Och! but I was upstairs afore you could turn about, a-givin' the missus warnin'; an' only stopt wid her by her raisin' me wages two dollars and playdin' wid me how it was a Christian's duty to bear wid haythins and taitch 'em all in our power — the saints save us! Well, the ways and trials I had wid that Chineser, Ann Ryan, I couldn't be tellin'. Not a blissed thing cud I do but he 'd be lookin' on wid his eyes cocked up'ard like two poomp-handles, an' he widdout a speck or a smitch o' whiskers on him, and his finger-nails

full a yard long. But it's dying you'd be to see the missus a-larnin' him, and he grinnin' an' waggin' his pig-tail (which was pieced out long wid some black stoof, the haythen chate!), and gettin' into her ways wonderful quick, I don't deny, imitatin' that sharp, you'd be shurprised, and ketchin' and copyin' things the best of us will do a-hurried wid work yet don't want comin' to the knowledge of the family—bad luck to him!

Is it ate wid him? Arrah, an' would I be sittin' wid a haythen, and he a-atin' wid drum-sticks—yes, an' atin' dogs an' cats unknownst to me, I warrant you, which is the custom of them Chinesers, till the thought made me that sick I could die. An' didn't the crayture proffer to help me a wake ago come Toosday, an' me a foldin' down me clane clothes for the ironin', an' fill his haythen mouth wid wather, an' afore I could hinder squrrit it through his teeth stret over the best linen table-cloth and fold it up tight, as innercent now as a baby, the dirty baste! But the worrest of all was the copyin' he'd be doin', till ye'd be distracted. It's yerself knows the tinder feet that's on me since ever I've bin in this country. Well, owin' to that, I fell into the way o' slippin' me shoes off when I'd be settin' down to pale the praties or the likes of that, and, do ye mind, that haythen would do the same thing after me whinever the missus set him parin' apples or tomaterses. The saints in heaven couldn't have made him belave he cud

kape the shoes on him when he'd be payling anything.

Did I lave fur that? Faix an' didn't he get me into trouble wid my missus, the haythin? You're aware yerself how the boondles comin' from the grocery often contains more'n'll go into anything dacently. So, for that matter, I'd now and then take out a sup o' sugar, or flour, or tay, an' wrap it in paper and put it in me bit of a box tucked under the ironin' blankit the how it cuddent be bodderin' any one. Well, what should it be, but this blessed Sathurday morn the missus was a-spakin' pleasant and respec'ful wid me in me kitchen, when the grocer boy comes in an' stands fornenst her wid his boondles, an' she motions like to Fing Wing (which I never would call him by that name nor any other but just haythin); she motions to him, she does, for to take the boondles an' empty out the sugar an' what not where they belongs. If you'll belave me, Ann Ryan, what did that blatherin' Chineser do but take out a sup o' sugar, an' a handful o' tay, an' a bit o' chaze, right afore the missus, wrap them into bits o' paper, an' I spacheless wid shurprise, an' he the next minute up wid the ironin' blankit and pullin' out me box wid a show o' bein' sly to put them in. Och, the Lord forgive me, but I clutched it, and the missus sayin', "O Kitty!" in a way that 'ud curdle your blood. "He's a haythin nager," says I. "I've found you out," says she. "I'll arrist him," says I. "It's you ought to be arristed," says

she. "You won't," says I. "I will," says she; and so it went, till she give me such sass as I cuddent take from no lady, an' I give her warnin' an' left that instant, an' she a-pointin' to the doore.

It is now the proper time for the cross-eyed woman to fool with the garden hose. I have faced death in almost every form, and I do not know what fear is, but when a woman with one eye gazing into the zodiac and the other peering into the middle of next week, and wearing one of those floppy sun-bonnets, picks up the nozzle of the garden hose and turns on the full force of the institution, I fly wildly to the Mountains of Hepsidam.

Water won't hurt any one, of course, if care is used not to forget and drink any of it, but it is this horrible suspense and uncertainty about facing the nozzle of a garden hose in the hands of a cross-eyed woman that unnerves and paralyzes me.

Instantaneous death is nothing to me. I am as cool and collected where leaden rain and iron hail are thickest as I would be in my own office writing the obituary of the man who steals my jokes. But I hate to be drowned slowly in my good clothes and on dry land, and have my dying gaze rest on a woman whose ravishing beauty would drive a narrow-gage mule into convulsions and make him hate himself t'death.

BILL NYE.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

A LETTER

From a Candidate for the Presidency in Answer to Suttin Questions Proposed by Mr. Hosea Biglow, Inclosed in a Note from Mr. Biglow to S. H. Gay, Esq., Editor of the National Anti-Slavery Standard.

DEER SIR its gut to be the fashun now to rite letters to the candid 8s and i wus chose at a public Meetin in Jaalam to du wut wus nessary fur that town. i writ to 271 ginerals and gut ansers to 209. tha air called candid 8s but I don't see nothin candid about 'em. this here 1 wich I send wus thought satty's factory. I dunno as it's ushle to print Poscrips, but as all the ansers I got hed the saim, I sposed it wus best. times has gretly changed. Formaly to knock a man into a cocked hat wus to use him up, but now it ony gives him a chance fur the cheef madgustracy.—H. B.

DEAR SIR,—You wish to know my notions
On sartin pints thet rile the land;
There 's nothin' thet my natur so shuns
Ez bein' mum or underhand:
I 'm a straight-spoken kind o' creetur
Thet blurts right out wut 's in his head,
An' ef I 've one pecooler feetur,
It is a nose thet wunt be led.

So, to begin at the beginnin'
An' come direcly to the pint,
I think the country's underpinnin'
Is some consid'ble out o' jint;

I aint agoin' to try your patience
By tellin' who done this or thet,
I don't make no insinooations,
I jest let on I smell a rat.

Thet is, I mean, it seems to me so,
But, ef the public think I 'm wrong,
I wunt deny but wut I be so,—
An', fact, it don't smell very strong;
My mind's tu fair to lose its balance
An' say wich party hez most sense;
There may be folks o' greater talence
Thet can't set stiddier on the fence.

I 'm an eclectic; ez to choosin'
'Twixt this an' thet, I 'm plaguy lawth;
I leave a side thet looks like losin',
But (wile there's doubt) I stick to both;
I stan' upon the Constitution,
Ez preudunt statesmun say, who've planned
A way to git the most profusion
O' chances ez to *ware* they'll stand

Ez fer the war, I go agin it, —
I mean to say I kind o' du,—
Thet is, I mean thet, bein' in it,
The best way wuz to fight it thru;
Not but wut abstract war is horrid,
I sign to thet with all my heart,-
But civlyzation *doos* git forrid
Sometimes upon a powder-cart.

A Letter

About thet darned Proviso matter
I never hed a grain o' doubt,
Nor I aint one my sense to scatter
So 'st no one couldn't pick it out;
My love fer North an' South is equil,
So I'll jest answer plump an' frank,
No matter wut may be the sequil,—
Yes, Sir, I *am* agin a Bank.

Ez to the answerin' o' questions,
I'm an off ox at bein' druv,
Though I aint one thet ary test shuns
'll give our folks a helpin' shove;
Kind o' permiscoous I go it
Fer the holl country, an' the ground
I take, ez nigh ez I can show it,
Is pooty gen'ally all round.

I don't appruve o' givin' pledges;
You'd ough' to leave a feller free,
An' not go knockin' out the wedges
To ketch his fingers in the tree;
Pledges air awfle breachy cattle
Thet preudunt farmers don't turn out.
Ez long 'z the people git their rattle,
Wut is there fer 'm to grout about?

Ez to the slaves, there's no confusion
In *my* idees consarnin' them,—
I think they air an Institution,
A sort of—yes, jest so,—ahem:

Do *I* own any? Of my merit
On thet pint you yourself may jedge;
All is, I never drink no sperit,
Nor I haint never signed no pledge.

Ez to my princerples, I glory
In hevin' nothin' o' the sort;
I aint a Wig, I aint a Tory,
I'm jest a canderdate, in short;
Thet's fair an' square an' parpendicler,
But, ef the Public cares a fig
To hev me an' thin' in particler,
Wy, I'm a kind o' peri-Wig.

P. S.

Ez we're a sort o' privateerin',
O' course, you know, it's sheer an' sheer,
An' there is sutthin' wuth your hearin'
I'll mention in *your* privit ear:
Ef you git *me* inside the White House,
Your head with ile I'll kin' o' 'nint
By gittin' *you* inside the Light-house
Down to the eend o' Jaalam Pint.

An' ez the North hez took to brustlin'
At bein' scrouged frum off the roost,
I'll tell ye wut'll save all tusslin'
An' give our side a harnsome boost,—
Tell 'em thet on the Slavery question
I'm RIGHT, although to speak I'm lawth;
This gives you a safe pint to rest on,
An' leaves me frontin' South by North.

—"*Biglow Papers.*"

JOHN GODFREY SAXE

THE COQUETTE—A PORTRAIT

"You're clever at drawing, I own,"
  Said my beautiful cousin Lisette,
As we sat by the window alone,
  "But say, can you paint a Coquette?"

"She's painted already," quoth I;
  "Nay, nay!" said the laughing Lisette,
"Now none of your joking—but try
  And paint me a thorough Coquette."

"Well, Cousin," at once I began,
  In the ear of the eager Lisette,
"I'll paint you as well as I can,
  That wonderful thing, a Coquette.

"She wears a most beautiful face"
  ("Of course," said the pretty Lisette),
"And isn't deficient in grace,
  Or else she were not a Coquette.

"And then she is daintily made"
  (A smile from the dainty Lisette)
"By people expert in the trade
  Of forming a proper Coquette.

"She's the winningest ways with the beaux"
  ("Go on!" said the winning Lisette),

"But there isn't a man of them knows
The mind of the fickle Coquette!

"She knows how to weep and to sigh"
(A sigh from the tender Lisette),
"But her weeping is all in my eye —
Not that of the cunning Coquette!

"In short, she 's a creature of art"
("O hush!" said the frowning Lisette),
"With merely the ghost of a heart—
Enough for a thorough Coquette.

"And yet I could easily prove"
("Now don't!" said the angry Lisette),
"The lady is always in love—
In love with herself—the Coquette!

"There—do not be angry—you know,
My dear little cousin Lisette,
You told me a moment ago,
To paint *you*—a thorough Coquette!"

Henry Ward Beecher, in his famous speech at Manchester, England, in which he talked for an hour against a howling mob of Rebel sympathizers before he gained their attention, was interrupted by a man in the audience who shouted: "Why didn't you whip the Confederates in sixty days, as you said you would?" "Because," replied Beecher, "we found we had Americans to fight instead of Englishmen."

SAMUEL L. CLEMENS ("Mark Twain")

COLONEL MULBERRY SELLERS

Colonel Mulberry Sellers was in his "library," which was his "drawing-room," and was also his "picture gallery," and likewise his "workshop." Sometimes he called it by one of these names, sometimes by another, according to occasion and circumstance. He was constructing what seemed to be some kind of a frail mechanical toy, and was apparently very much interested in his work. He was a white-headed man now, but otherwise he was as young, alert, buoyant, visionary and enterprising as ever. His loving old wife sat near by, contentedly knitting and thinking, with a cat asleep in her lap. The room was large, light and had a comfortable look—in fact, a homelike look—though the furniture was of a humble sort and not overabundant, and the knick-knacks and things that go to adorn a living-room not plenty and not costly. But there were natural flowers, and there was an abstract and unclassifiable something about the place which betrayed the presence in the house of somebody with a happy taste and an effective touch.

Even the deadly chromos on the walls were somehow without offense; in fact they seemed

to belong there and to add an attraction to the room—a fascination, anyway; for whoever got his eye on one of them was like to gaze and suffer till he died—you have seen that kind of pictures. Some of these terrors were landscapes, some libeled the sea, some were ostensible portraits, all were crimes. All the portraits were recognizable as dead Americans of distinction, and yet, through labeling, added by a daring hand, they were all doing duty here as "Earls of Rossmore." The newest one had left the works as Andrew Jackson, but was doing its best now as "Simon Lathers Lord Rossmore, Present Earl" On one wall was a cheap old railroad map of Warwickshire. This had been newly labeled, "The Rossmore Estates." On the opposite wall was another map, and this was the most imposing decoration of the establishment, and the first to catch a stranger's attention, because of its great size. It had once borne simply the title SIBERIA, but now the word "FUTURE" had been written in front of that word. There were other additions, in red ink—many cities, with great populations set down, scattered over the vast country at points where neither cities nor populations exist to-day. One of these cities, with population placed at 1,500,000, bore the name "Liberty-orloffskoizalinski," and there was a still more populous one, centrally located and marked "Capitol," which bore the name "Freedom-slovnaivenovich."

The mansion—the Colonel's usual name for

the house—was a rickety old two-story frame of considerable size, which had been painted, some time or other, but had nearly forgotten it. It was away out in the ragged edge of Washington, and had once been somebody's country place. It had a neglected yard around it, with a paling fence that needed straightening up in places, and a gate that would stay shut. By the door-post were several modest tin signs. "Col. Mulberry Sellers, Attorney-at-Law and Claim Agent," was the principal one. One learned from the others that the Colonel was a Materializer, a Hypnotizer, a Mind-cure dabbler, and so on. For he was a man who could always find things to do.

A white-headed Negro man, with spectacles and damaged white-cotton gloves, appeared in the presence, made a stately obeisance, and announced:

"Marse Washington Hawkins, suh."

"Great Scott! Show him in, Dan'l; show him in."

The Colonel and his wife were on their feet in a moment, and the next moment were joyfully wringing the hands of a stoutish, discouraged-looking man, whose general aspect suggested that he was fifty years old, but whose hair swore to a hundred.

"Well, well, well, Washington, my boy, it *is* good to look at you again. Sit down, sit down, and make yourself at home. There now—why, you look perfectly natural; ageing a little, just a

little, but you'd have known him anywhere wouldn't you, Polly?"

"Oh, yes, Berry; he's *just* like his pa would have looked if he'd lived. Dear, dear, where have you dropped from? Let me see, how long is it since——"

"I should say it's all of fifteen years, Mrs. Sellers."

"Well, well, how time does get away with us. Yes, and oh, the changes that——"

There was a sudden catch of her voice and a trembling of the lip, the men waiting reverently for her to get command of herself and go on; but, after a little struggle, she turned away with her apron to her eyes, and softly disappeared.

"Seeing you made her think of the children, poor thing—dear, dear, they're all dead but the youngest. But banish care; it's no time for it now—on with the dance, let joy be unconfided, is my motto—whether there's any dance to dance or any joy to unconfide, you'll be the healthier for it every time—every time, Washington—it's my experience, and I've seen a good deal of this world. Come, where have you disappeared to all these years, and are you from there now, or where are you from?"

"I don't quite think you would ever guess, Colonel. Cherokee Strip."

"My land!"

"Sure as you live."

"You can't mean it. Actually *living* out there?"

"Well, yes, if a body may call it that; though it's a pretty strong term for 'dobies and jackass rabbits, boiled beans and slapjack, depression, withered hopes, poverty in all its varieties——"

"Louise out there?"

"Yes, and the children."

"Out there now?"

"Yes; I could n't afford to bring them with me."

"Oh, I see—you had to come—claim against the Government. Make yourself perfectly easy —I'll take care of that."

"But it isn't a claim against the Government."

"No? Want to be a postmaster? *That's* all right. Leave it to me. I'll fix it."

"But it isn't postmaster—you 're all astray yet."

"Well, good gracious, Washington, why don't you come out and tell me what it is? What do you want to be so reserved and distrustful with an old friend like me for? Don't you reckon I can keep a se——"

"There's no secret about it—you merely don't give me a chance to——"

"Now, look here, old friend, I know the human race; and I know that when a man comes to Washington, I don't care if it's from Heaven, let alone Cherokee Strip, it's because he *wants* something. And I know that as a rule he's not going to get it; that he'll stay and try for another thing and won't get that; the same luck with the next

and the next and the next; and keeps on till he strikes bottom, and is too poor and ashamed to go back, even to Cherokee Strip; and at last his heart breaks and they take up a collection and bury him. There— don't interrupt me, I know what I'm talking about. Happy and prosperous in the Far West, wasn't I? *You* know that. Principal citizen of Hawkeye, looked up to by everybody, kind of an autocrat, actually a kind of an autocrat, Washington. Well, nothing would do but I must go as Minister to St. James's, the Governor and everybody insisting, you know, and so at last I consented—no getting out of it, *had* to do it, so here I came. *A day too late*, Washington. Think of that—what little things change the world's history—yes, sir, the place had been filled. Well, there I was, you see. I offered to compromise and go to Paris. The President was very sorry and all that, but that place, you see, didn't belong to the West, so there I was again. There was no help for it, so I had to stoop a little—we all reach the day some time or other when we've got to do that, Washington, and it's not a bad thing for us, either, take it by and large all round—I had to stoop a little and offer to take Constantinople. Washington, consider this—for it's perfectly true—within a month I *asked* for China; within another month I *begged* for Japan; one year later I was away down, down, down, supplicating with tears and anguish for the bottom office in the gift of the Government of the United States—Flint-picker

in the cellars of the War Department. And by George, I didn't get it."

"Flint-picker?"

"Yes. Office established in the time of the Revolution—last century. The musket-flints for the military posts were supplied from the Capitol. They do it yet; for although the flint-arm has gone out and the forts have tumbled down, the decree hasn't been repealed—been overlooked and forgotten, you see—and so the vacancies where old Ticonderoga and others used to stand still get their six quarts of gun-flints a year just the same."

Washington said musingly after a pause: "How strange it seems—to start for Minister to England at twenty thousand a year and fail for flint-picker at——"

"Three dollars a week. It's human life, Washington—just an epitome of human ambition and struggle, and the outcome; you aim for the palace and get drowned in the sewer."

There was another meditative silence. Then Washington said, with earnest compassion in his voice:

"And so, after coming here, against your inclination, to satisfy your sense of patriotic duty and appease a selfish public clamor, you get absolutely nothing for it."

"Nothing? The Colonel had to get up and stand, to get room for his amazement to expand. "*Nothing*, Washington? I ask you this: to be a Perpetual Member and the *only* Perpetual

Member of a Diplomatic Body accredited to the greatest country on earth—do you call that nothing?"

It was Washington's turn to be amazed. He was stricken dumb; but the wide-eyed wonder, the reverent admiration expressed in his face, were more eloquent than any words could have been. The Colonel's wounded spirit was healed, and he resumed his seat, pleased and content. He leaned forward and said impressively:

"What was due to a man who had become forever conspicuous by an experience without precedence in the history of the world—a man made permanently and diplomatically sacred, so to speak, by having been connected, temporarily, through solicitation, with every single diplomatic post in the roster of this Government, from Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James's all the way down to Consul to a guano rock in the Straits of Sunda—salary payable in guano—which disappeared by volcanic convulsion the day before they got down to my name in the list of applicants? Certainly something august enough to be answerable to the size of this unique and memorable experience was my due, and I got it. By the common voice of this community, by acclamation of the people, that mighty utterance which brushes aside laws and legislation, and from whose decrees there is no appeal, I was named Perpetual Member of the Diplomatic Body representing the multifarious sovereignties and

civilizations of the globe near the republican court of the United States of America. And they brought me home with a torchlight procession."

"It is wonderful, Colonel—simply wonderful."

"It's the loftiest official position in the whole earth."

"I should think so—and the most commanding."

"You have named the word. Think of it! I frown, and there is war; I smile, and contending nations lay down their arms."

"It is awful. The responsibility, I mean."

"It is nothing. Responsibility is no burden to me; I am used to it; have always been used to it."

"And the work—the work! Do you have to attend all the sittings?"

"Who, I? Does the Emperor of Russia attend the conclaves of the Governors of the provinces? He sits at home and indicates his pleasure."

Washington was silent a moment, then a deep sigh escaped him.

"How proud I was an hour ago; how paltry seems my little promotion now! Colonel, the reason I came to Washington is—I am Congressional Delegate from Cherokee Strip!"

The Colonel sprang to his feet and broke out with prodigious enthusiasm:

"Give me your hand, my boy—this is immense news! I congratulate you with all my heart.

My prophecies stand firm. I always said it was in you. I always said you were born for high distinction and would achieve it. You ask Polly if I didn't."

Washington was dazed by this most unexpected demonstration.

"Why, Colonel, there's nothing *to* it. That little, narrow, desolate, unpeopled, oblong streak of grass and gravel, lost in the remote wastes of the vast continent—why, it's like representing a billiard table—a discarded one."

"Tut-tut, it's a great, it's a staving preferment, and just opulent with influence here."

"Shucks, Colonel, I haven't even a vote."

"That's nothing; you can make speeches."

"No, I can't. The population's only two hundred——"

"That's all right, that's all right——"

"And they hadn't any right to elect me; we're not even a territory; there's no Organic Act; the Government hasn't any official knowledge of us whatever."

"Never mind about that; I'll fix that. I'll rush the thing through; I'll get you organized in no time."

"*Will* you, Colonel—it's *too* good of you; but it's just your old sterling self, the same old, ever-faithful friend," and the grateful tears welled up in Washington's eyes.

"It's just as good as done, my boy, just as good as done. Shake hands. We'll hitch teams together, you and I, and we'll make things hum!"

FREDERICK WILLIAM SHELTON

INCIDENTS IN A RETIRED LIFE

Last year I had a solitary peach upon a solitary tree, for the early frost frustrated the delicious crop. This only one, which, from its golden color, might be entitled El Dorado, I watched with fear and trembling from day to day, patiently waiting for the identical time when I should buoy it up carefully in my hand, that its pulp should not be bruised, tear off its thin peel, admonished that the time had come by a gradual releasing of the fruit from its adhesion to the stem, and I appointed the next day for the ceremonial of plucking. The morrow dawned, as bright a day as ever dawned upon the earth, and on a near approach I found it still there, and said, with chuckling gratification, "There is some delicacy in thieves." Alas! on reaching it, somebody had taken a large bite out of the ripest cheeks, but with a sacrilegious witticism had left it sticking to the stem. The detestable prints of the teeth which bit it were still in it, and a wasp was gloating at its core. Had he taken the whole peach I should have vented my feelings in a violence of indignation unsuited to a balmy garden. But as he was joker enough to bite only its sunny side, I must

forgive him, as one who has some element of salvation in his character, because he is disposed to look at the bright side of things. What is a peach? A mere globe of succulent and delicious pulp, which I would rather be deprived of than cultivate bad feelings, even toward thieves. Wherever you find rogues whose deeds involve a saline element of wit, make up your mind that they are no rogues.—*Up the River.*

This morning the Shanghai hen laid another egg, of a rich brunette complexion, which we took away, and replaced by a common vulgar egg, intending to reserve the Shanghai's in a cool place until the time of incubation. Very much amused was I with the sequel. The proud and haughty superiority of the breed manifested itself by detecting the cheat and resenting the insult. Shang and Eng flew at the supposititious egg with the utmost indignation and picked it to pieces, scratching the remnants of the shell from the nest. . . . There is one peculiarity of these fowls which deserves to be mentioned. When I removed mine from the basket I thought that the worthy donor had clipped their wings to prevent them from flying away or scaling the hennery. On further knowledge I have learned that their style and fashion is that of the jacket-sleeve and bobtail coat. Their eminent domesticity is clearly signified by this, because they cannot get over an ordinary fence, and would not if they could It is because they have no dis-

position to do this, that Nature has cropped them of their superfluous wings and given them a plumage suitable to their desires. "Their sober wishes never learn to stray." They often come into the kitchen, but never go abroad to associate with common fowls, but remain at home in dignified retirement. Another thing remarkable and quite renowned about this is the Oriental courtesy and politeness of the cock. If you throw a piece of bread, he waits till the hen helps herself first, and often carries it to her in his own beak. The feathered people in the East, and those *not* feathered, are far superior to ours in those elaborate and delightful forms of manner which add a charm and zest to life. This has been from the days of Abraham until now. There are no common people in these realms. All are polite, and the very roosters illustrate the best principles laid down in any book of etiquette. *Book of Etiquette!* What is conventionalism without the inborn sense? Can any man or beast be taught to be mechanically polite? Not at all—not at all! . . .

I have received a present of a pair of Cochin Chinas, a superb cock and a dun-colored hen. I put them with my other fowls in the cellar, to protect them for a short time from the severity of the weather. My Shanghai rooster had for several nights been housed up; for on one occasion, when the cold was snapping, he was discovered under the lee of a stone wall, standing on one leg, taking no notice of the approach of

any one, and nearly gone. When brought in, he backed up against the red-hot kitchen stove, and burned his tail off. Before this he had no feathers in the rear to speak of, and now he is bobtailed indeed. Anne sewed upon him a jacket of carpet, and put him in a tea-box for the night; and it was ludicrous on the next morning to see him lifting up his head above the square prison-box and crowing lustily to greet the day. But before breakfast time he had a dreadful fit. He retreated against the wall, he fell upon his side, he kicked, and he "carried on"; but when the carpet was taken off he came to himself, and ate corn with a voracious appetite. His indisposition was, no doubt, occasioned by a rush of blood to the head from the tightness of the bandages. When Shanghai and Cochin met together in the cellar, they enacted in that dusky hole all the barbarities of a profane cockpit. I heard a sound as if from the tumbling of barrels, followed by a dull, thumping noise, like spirit-rappings, and went below, where the first object which met my eye was a mouse creeping along the beam out of an excavation in my pineapple cheese. As for the fowls, instead of salutation after the respectful manner of their country—which is expressed thus: Shang knocks knees to Cochin, bows three times, touches the ground, and makes obeisance—they were engaged in a bloody fight, unworthy of celestial poultry. With their heads down, eyes flashing, and red as vipers, and with a feathery frill or ruffle about

their necks, they were leaping at each other, to see who should hold dominion over the ash-heap. It put me exactly in mind of two Scythians or two Greeks in America, where each wished to be considered the only Scythian or only Greek in the country. A contest or emulation is at all times highly animating and full of zest, whether two scholars write, two athletes strive, two boilers strain, or two cocks fight. Every lazy dog in the vicinity is immediately at hand. I looked on until I saw the Shanghai's peepers darkened, and his comb streaming with blood. These birds contended for some days after for preëminence on the lawn, and no flinching could be observed on either part, although the Shanghai was by one-third the smaller of the two. At last the latter was thoroughly mortified; his eyes wavered and wandered vaguely, as he stood opposite the foe, he turned tail and ran. From that moment he became the veriest coward, and submitted to every indignity without attempting to resist. He suffered himself to be chased about the lawn, fled from the Indian meal, and was almost starved. Such submission on his part at last resulted in peace, and the two rivals walked side by side without fighting, and ate together, with a mutual concession, of the corn. This, in turn engendered a degree of presumption on the part of the Shanghai cock; and one day, when the dew sparkled and the sun shone peculiarly bright, he so far forgot himself as to ascend a hillock

and venture on a tolerably triumphant crow. It showed a lack of judgment; his cock-a-doodle-doo proved fatal. Scarcely had he done so, when Cochin China rushed upon him, tore out his feathers, and flogged him so severely that it was doubtful whether he would remain with us. Now, alas! he presents a sad spectacle; his comb frozen off, his tail burned off, and his head knocked to a jelly. While the corn jingles in the throats of his compeers when they eagerly snap it, as if they were eating from a pile of shilling pieces or fi'-penny bits, he stands aloof and grubs in the ground. How changed!—*Up the River.*

A clergyman was very anxious to introduce some hymn-books into the church, and arranged with his clerk that the latter was to give out the notice immediately after the sermon. The clerk, however, had a notice of his own to give out with reference to the baptism of infants. Accordingly, at the close of the sermon he arose and announced that "All those who have children whom they wish to have baptized please send in their names at once to the clerk." The clergyman, who was stone deaf, assumed that the clerk was giving out the hymn-book notice, and immediately rose and said: "And I should say, for the benefit of those who haven't any, that they may be obtained at the vestry any day from three to four o'clock; the ordinary little ones at one shilling each, and special ones with red backs at one shilling and fourpence."

BRET HARTE

MELONS

As I do not suppose the most gentle of readers will believe that anybody's sponsors in baptism ever wilfully assumed the responsibility of such a name, I may as well state that I have reason to infer that Melons was simply the nickname of a small boy I once knew. If he had any other, I never knew it.

Various theories were often projected by me to account for this strange cognomen. His head, which was covered with a transparent down, like that which clothes very small chickens, plainly permitting the scalp to show through, to an imaginative mind might have suggested that succulent vegetable. That his parents, recognizing some poetical significance in the fruits of the season, might have given this name to an August child, was an Oriental explanation. That from his infancy he was fond of indulging in melons seemed on the whole the most likely, particularly as Fancy was not bred in McGinnis's Court. He dawned upon me as Melons. His proximity was indicated by shrill, youthful voices as, "Ah, Melons!" or playfully, "Hi, Melons!" or authoritatively, "You, Melons!"

McGinnis's Court was a democratic expression

of some obstinate and radical property-holder. Occupying a limited space between two fashionable thoroughfares, it refused to conform to circumstances, but sturdily paraded its unkempt glories, and frequently asserted itself in ungrammatical language. My window—a rear room on the ground floor—in this way derived blended light and shadow from the court. So low was the window-sill, that had I been the least disposed to somnambulism it would have broken out under such favorable auspices, and I should have haunted McGinnis's Court. My speculations as to the origin of the court were not altogether gratuitous, for by means of this window I once saw the Past, as through a glass darkly. It was a Celtic shadow that early one morning obstructed my ancient lights. It seemed to belong to an individual with a pea-coat, a stubby pipe, and bristling beard. He was gazing intently at the court, resting on a heavy cane, somewhat in the way that heroes dramatically visit the scenes of their boyhood. As there was little of architectural beauty in the court, I came to the conclusion that it was McGinnis looking after his property. The fact that he carefully kicked a broken bottle out of the road somewhat strengthened me in the opinion. But he presently walked away, and the court knew him no more. He probably collected his rents by proxy—if he collected them at all.

Beyond Melons, of whom all this is purely introductory, there was little to interest the

most sanguine and hopeful nature. In common with all such localities, a great deal of washing was done, in comparison with the visible results. There was always something whisking on the line, and always something whisking through the court that looked as if it ought to be there A fish-geranium—of all plants kept for the recreation of mankind, certainly the greatest illusion—straggled under the window. Through its dusty leaves I caught the first glance of Melons.

His age was about seven. He looked older, from the venerable whiteness of his head, and it was impossible to conjecture his size, as he always wore clothes apparently belonging to some shapely youth of nineteen. A pair of pantaloons that, when sustained by a single suspender, completely equipped him, formed his every-day suit. How, with this lavish superfluity of clothing, he managed to perform the surprising gymnastic feats it had been my privilege to witness, I have never been able to tell. His "turning the crab," and other minor dislocations, were always attended with success. It was not an unusual sight at any hour of the day to find Melons suspended on a line, or to see his venerable head appearing above the roofs of the outhouses. Melons knew the exact height of every fence in the vicinity, its facilities for scaling, and the possibility of seizure on the other side. His more peaceful and quieter amusements consisted in dragging a disused

boiler by a large string, with hideous outcries, to imaginary fires.

Melons was not gregarious in his habits. A few youth of his own age sometimes called upon him, but they eventually became abusive, and their visits were more strictly predatory incursions for old bottles and junk which formed the staple of McGinnis's Court. Overcome by loneliness one day, Melons inveigled a blind harper into the court. For two hours did that wretched man prosecute his unhallowed calling, unrecompensed, and going round and round the court, apparently under the impression that it was some other place, while Melons surveyed him from an adjoining fence with calm satisfaction. It was this absence of conscientious motive that brought Melons into disrepute with his aristocratic neighbors. Orders were issued that no child of wealthy and pious parentage should play with him. This mandate, as a matter of course, invested Melons with a fascinating interest to them. Admiring glances were cast at Melons from nursery windows. Baby fingers beckoned to him. Invitations to tea (on wood and pewter) were lisped to him from aristocratic back-yards. It was evident he was looked upon as a pure and noble being, untrammeled by the conventionalities of parentage, and physically as well as mentally exalted above them. One afternoon an unusual commotion prevailed in the vicinity of McGinnis's Court. Looking from my window I saw Melons perched

on the roof of a stable, pulling up a rope by which one "Tommy," an infant scion of an adjacent and wealthy house, was suspended in midair. In vain the female relatives of Tommy congregated in the back-yard expostulated with Melons; in vain the unhappy father shook his fist at him. Secure in his position, Melons redoubled his exertions and at last landed Tommy on the roof. Then it was that the humiliating fact was disclosed that Tommy had been acting in collusion with Melons. He grinned delightedly back at his parents, as if "by merit raised to that bad eminence." Long before the ladder arrived that was to succor him, he became the sworn ally of Melons, and, I regret to say, incited by the same audacious boy, "chaffed" his own flesh and blood below him. He was eventually taken, though, of course, Melons escaped. But Tommy was restricted to the window after that, and the companionship was limited to "Hi, Melons!" and "You, Tommy!" and Melons to all practical purposes lost him forever. I looked afterward to see some signs of sorrow on Melons's part, but in vain; he buried his grief, if he had any, somewhere in his one voluminous garment.

At about this time my opportunities of knowing Melons became more extended. I was engaged in filling a void in the Literature of the Pacific coast. As this void was a pretty large one, and as I was informed that the Pacific coast languished under it, I set apart two hours each

day to this work of filling in. It was necessary that I should adopt a methodical system, so I retired from the world and locked myself in my room at a certain hour each day, after coming from my office. I then carefully drew out my portfolio and read what I had written the day before. This would suggest some alterations, and I would carefully rewrite it. During this operation I would turn to consult a book of reference, which invariably proved extremely interesting and attractive. It would generally suggest another and better method of "filling in." Turning this method over reflectively in my mind, I would finally commence the new method which I eventually abandoned for the original plan. At this time I would become convinced that my exhausted faculties demanded a cigar. The operation of lighting a cigar usually suggested that a little quiet reflection and meditation would be of service to me, and I always allowed myself to be guided by prudential instincts. Eventually, seated by my window, as before stated, Melons asserted himself. Though our conversation rarely went further than "Hello, Mister!" and "Ah, Melons!" a vagabond instinct we felt in common implied a communion deeper than words. Thus time passed, often beguiled by gymnastics on the fence or line (always with an eye to my window) until dinner was announced and I found a more practical void required my attention. An unlooked-for incident drew us in closer relation.

Melons

A seafaring friend just from a tropical voyage had presented me with a bunch of bananas. They were not quite ripe, and I hung them before my window to mature in the sun of McGinnis's Court, whose forcing qualities were remarkable. In the mysteriously mingled odors of ship and shore which they diffused throughout my room, there was lingering reminiscence of low latitudes But even that joy was fleeting and evanescent: they never reached maturity.

Coming home one day, as I turned the corner of that fashionable thoroughfare before alluded to, I met a small boy eating a banana. There was nothing remarkable in that, but as I neared McGinnis's Court I presently met another small boy, also eating a banana. A third small boy engaged in a like occupation obtruded a painful coincidence upon my mind. I leave the psychological reader to determine the exact correlation between the circumstance and the sickening sense of loss that overcame me on witnessing it. I reached my room—and found the bunch of bananas was gone.

There was but one that knew of their existence, but one who frequented my window, but one capable of gymnastic effort to procure them, and that was—I blush to say it—Melons. Melons the depredator—Melons, despoiled by larger boys of his ill-gotten booty, or reckless and indiscreetly liberal; Melons—now a fugitive on some neighborhood housetop. I lit a cigar, and, drawing my chair to the window, sought

surcease of sorrow in the contemplation of the fish-geranium. In a few moments something white passed my window at about the level of the edge. There was no mistaking that hoary head, which now represented to me only aged iniquity. It was Melons, that venerable, juvenile hypocrite.

He affected not to observe me, and would have withdrawn quietly, but that horrible fascination which causes the murderer to revisit the scene of his crime impelled him toward my window.

I smoked calmly, and gazed at him without speaking.

He walked several times up and down the court with a half-rigid, half-belligerent expression of eye and shoulder, intended to represent the carelessness of innocence.

Once or twice he stopped, and putting his arms their whole length into his capacious trousers, gazed with some interest at the additional width they thus acquired. Then he whistled. The singular conflicting conditions of John Brown's body and soul were at that time beginning to attract the attention of youth, and Melons's performance of that melody was always remarkable. But to-day he whistled falsely and shrilly between his teeth.

At last he met my eye. He winced slightly, but recovered himself, and going to the fence, stood for a few moments on his hands, with his bare feet quivering in the air. Then he

turned toward me and threw out a conversational preliminary:

"They is a cirkis"—said Melons gravely, hanging with his back to the fence and his arms twisted around the palings—"a cirkis over yonder!"—indicating the locality with his foot—"with hosses and hossback riders. They is a man wot rides six hosses to onct—six hosses to onct—and nary saddle"—and he paused in expectation.

Even this equestrian novelty did not affect me. I still kept a fixed gaze on Melons's eye, and he began to tremble and visibly shrink in his capacious garment. Some other desperate means—conversation with Melons was always a desperate means—must be resorted to. He recommenced more artfully:

"Do you know Carrots?"

I had a faint remembrance of a boy of that euphonious name, with scarlet hair, who was a playmate and persecutor of Melons. But I said nothing.

"Carrots is a bad boy. Killed a policeman onct. Wears a dirk knife in his boots. Saw him to-day looking in your windy."

I felt that this must end here. I rose sternly and addressed Melons.

"Melons, this is all irrelevant and impertinent to the case. *You* took those bananas. Your proposition regarding Carrots, even if I were inclined to accept it as credible information, does not alter the material issue. You took those

bananas. The offense under the statutes of California is felony. How far Carrots may have been accessory to the fact either before or after it is not my intention at present to discuss. The act is complete. Your present conduct shows the *animo furandi* to have been equally clear."

By the time I had finished this exordium Melons had disappeared, as I fully expected.

He never reappeared. The remorse that I have experienced for the part I had taken in what I fear may have resulted in his utter and complete extermination, alas! he may not know except through these pages. For I have never seen him since. Whether he ran away and went to sea to reappear at some future day as the most ancient of mariners, or whether he buried himself completely in his trousers, I never shall know. I have read the papers anxiously for accounts of him. I have gone to the police office in the vain attempt of identifying him as a lost child. But I never saw him or heard of him since. Strange fears have sometimes crossed my mind that his venerable appearance may have been actually the result of senility, and that he may have been gathered peacefully to his fathers in a green old age. I have even had doubts of his existence, and have sometimes thought that he was providentially and mysteriously offered to fill the void I have before alluded to. In that hope I have written these pages.—*Mrs. Skaggs's Husbands, and other Sketches.*

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

A LETTER FROM MR. EZEKIEL BIGLOW

THRASH away, you'll *hev* to rattle
On them kittle-drums o' yourn,
'Tain't a knowin' kind o' cattle
Thet is ketched with moldy corn:
Put in stiff, you fifer feller,
Let folks see how spry you be—
Guess you 'll toot till you are yeller
'Fore you git a-hold o' me!

Thet air flag's a leetle rotten,
Hope it ain't your Sunday's best—
Fact! it takes a sight o' cotton
To stuff out a soger's chest;
Sence we farmers hev to pay fer't,
Ef you must wear humps like these
S'posin' you should try salt hay fer't,
It would du ez slick ez grease.

'Twouldn't suit them Southun fellers,
They're a dreffle graspin' set,
We must ollers blow the bellers
Wen they want their irons het;
Maybe it's all right ez preachin',
But *my* narves it kind o' grates,
Wen I see the overreachin'
O' them nigger-drivin' states.

Them thet rule us, them slave-traders
  Hain't they cut a thunderin' swath
(Helped by Yankee renegaders),
  Thru the vartu o' the North!
We begin to think it's natur
  To take sarse an' not be riled—
Who'd expect to see a tater
  All on eend at bein' biled?

Ez fer war, I call it murder—
  There you hev it plain an' flat;
I don't want to go no furder
  Than my Testament fer that;
God hez sed so plump an' fairly,
  It's ez long ez it is broad,
An' you've gut to git up airly
  Ef you want to take in God.

'Tain't your eppyletts an' feathers
  Make the thing a grain more right;
'Tain't a-follerin' your bell-wethers
  Will excuse ye in His sight;
Ef you take a sword an' dror it,
  An' go stick a feller thru,
Guv'ment ain't to answer for it,
  God 'll send the bill to you.

Wut's the use o' meetin'-goin'
  Every Sabbath, wet or dry,
Ef it's right to go a-mowin'
  Feller-men like oats an' rye?

I dunno but wut it 's pooty
  Trainin' round in bobtail coats—
But it's curus Christian dooty,
  This 'ere cuttin' folks's throats.

They may talk o' Freedom's airy
  Tell they're pupple in the face—
It's a grand gret cemetary
  Fer the barthrights of our race;
They jest want this Californy
  So's to lug new slave states in
To abuse ye, an' to scorn ye,
  An' to plunder ye like sin.

Ain't it cute to see a Yankee
  Take sech everlastin' pains,
All to git the Devil's thankee,
  Helpin' on 'em weld their chains?
Wy, it's jest ez clear ez figgers,
  Clear ez one an' one make two,
Chaps thet make black slaves o' niggers
  Want to make white slaves o' you.

Tell ye jest the eend I've come to
  Arter cipherin' plaguy smart,
An' it makes a handy sum, tu,
  Any gump could larn by heart;
Laborin' man an' laborin' woman
  Hev one glory an' one shame.
Ev'ythin' thet's done inhuman
  Injers all on 'em the same.

'Tain't by turnin' out to hack folks,
You're agoin' to git your rights,
Nor by lookin' down on black folks
Coz you 're put upon by wite;
Slavery ain't o' nary color,
'Tain't the hide thet makes it wus,
All it keers fer is a feller
'S jest to make him fill his pus

Want to tackle *me* in, du ye?
I expect you'll hev to wait;
Wen cold lead puts daylight thru ye
You'll begin to kal'late;
S'posin the crows wun't fall to pickin
All the carkiss from your bones,
Coz you helped to give a lickin'
To them poor half-Spanish drones?

Jest go home an' ask our Nancy
Wether I 'd be sech a goose
Ez to jine ye — guess you 'd fancy
The etarnal bung wuz loose!
She wants me fer home consumption,
Let alone the hay's to mow—
Ef you're arter folks o' gumption,
You've a darned long row to hoe.

Take them editors thet's crowin'
Like a cockerel three months old—
Don't ketch any on 'em goin',
Though they *be* so blasted bold;

Ain't they a prime lot o' fellers?
'Fore they think on't they will sprout
(Like a peach thet's got the yellers),
With the meanness bustin' out.

Wal, go 'long to help 'em stealin'
Bigger pens to cram with slaves,
Help the men thet's ollers dealin'
Insults on your fathers' grave;
Help the strong to grind the feeble,
Help the many agin the few,
Help the men that call your people
Witewashed slaves an' peddlin' crew?

Massachusetts, God forgive her,
She's a-kneelin' with the rest,
She, thet ough' to ha' clung ferever
In her grand old eagle-nest;
She thet ough' to stand so fearless
Wile the wracks are round her hurled,
Holdin' up a beacon peerless
To the oppressed of all the world!

Hain't they sold your colored seamen?
Hain't they made your env'ys wiz?
Wut'll make ye act like freemen?
Wut'll git your dander riz?
Come, I 'll tell ye wut I 'm thinkin'
Is our dooty in this fix,
They'd ha' done 't ez quick ez winkin'
In the days o' seventy-six.

Clang the bells in every steeple,
  Call all true men to disown
The tradoocers of our people,
  The enslavers o' their own;
Let our dear old Bay State proudly
  Put the trumpet to her mouth,
Let her ring this messidge loudly
  In the ears of all the South—

"I'll return ye good fer evil,
  Much ez we frail mortils can,
But I wun't go help the Devil
  Makin' man the cuss o' man;
Call me coward, call me traiter,
  Jest ez suits your mean idees—
Here I stand a tyrant-hater,
  An' the friend o' God an' Peace!"

Ef I'd *my* way I hed ruther
  We should go to work an' part—
They take one way, we take t'other—
  Guess it wouldn't break my heart;
Man hed ought to put asunder
  Them thet God has noways jined;
An' I shouldn't gretly wonder
  Ef there's thousands o' my mind.

—*Biglow Papers.*

BALLAD

Der noble Ritter Hugo
Von Schwillensaufenstein,
Rode out mit shpeer and helmet.
Und he coom to de panks of de Rhine.

Und oop dere rose a meer maid,
Vot hadn't got nodings on,
Und she say, "Oh, Ritter Hugo,
Vhere you goes mit yourself alone?"

Und he says, "I rides in de creenwood
Mit helmet und mit shpeer,
Till I cooms into em Gasthaus,
Und dere I trinks some beer."

Und den outshpoke de maiden
Vot hadn't got nodings on:
"I ton't dink mooch of beoplesh
Dat goes mit demselfs alone.

"You 'd petter coom dawn in de wasser,
Vere dere's heaps of dings to see,
Und have a shplendid tinner
Und drafel along mit me.

"Dere you sees de fisch a-schwimmin,
Und you catches dem efery one"—
So sang dis wasser maiden
Vot had n't got nodings on.

"Dere ish drunks all full mit money,
In ships dat vent down of old;
Und you helpsh yourself, by dunder!
To shimmerin crowns of gold.

"Shoost look at dese shpoons und vatches!
Shoost see dese diamant rings!
Coom down und full your bockets,
Und I'll gis you like averydings.

"Vot you vantsh mit your schnapps und lager?
Coom down into der Rhine!
Der ish pottles der Kaiser Charlemagne
Vonce filled mit gold-red wine!"

Dat fetched him—he shtood all shpellpound;
She pooled his coat-tails down,
She drawed him oonder der wasser,
De maiden mit nodings on.

CHARLES G. LELAND.

A neighbor whose place adjoined Bronson Alcott's had a vegetable garden in which he took a great interest. Mr. Alcott had one also, and both men were especially interested in their potato patches. One morning, meeting by the fence, the neighbor said, "How is it, Mr. Alcott, you are never troubled with bugs, while my vines are crowded with them?"

"My friend," replied Mr. Alcott, "I rise very early in the morning, gather all the bugs from my vines and throw them into your yard."

G. H. DERBY ("Phœnix," "Squibob")

TUSHMAKER'S TOOTHPULLER

Doctor Tushmaker was never regularly bred as a physician or surgeon, but he possessed naturally a strong mechanical genius and a fine appetite; and finding his teeth of great service in gratifying the latter propensity, he concluded that he could do more good in the world, and create more real happiness therein, by putting the teeth of its inhabitants in good order than in any other way; so Tushmaker became a dentist. He was the man who first invented the method of placing small cog-wheels in the back teeth for the more perfect mastication of food, and he claimed to be the original discoverer of that method of filling cavities with a kind of putty which, becoming hard directly, causes the tooth to ache so grievously that it has to be pulled, thereby giving the dentist two successive fees for the same job.

Tushmaker was one day seated in his office, in the city of Boston, Massachusetts, when a stout old fellow named Byles presented himself to have a back tooth drawn. The dentist seated his patient in the chair of torture, and, opening his mouth, discovered there an enormous

tooth, on the right-hand side, about as large, as he afterward expressed it, "as a small Polyglot Bible."

"I shall have trouble with this tooth," thought Tushmaker, but he clapped on his heaviest forceps and pulled. It didn't come. Then he tried the turn-screw, exerting his utmost strength, but the tooth wouldn't stir. "Go away from here," said Tushmaker to Byles, "and return in a week, and I'll draw that tooth for you or know the reason why." Byles got up, clapped a handkerchief to his jaw, and put forth. Then the dentist went to work, and in three days he invented an instrument which he was confident would pull anything. It was a combination of the lever, pulley, wheel and axle, inclined plane, wedge and screw. The castings were made, and the machine put up in the office, over an iron chair rendered perfectly stationary by iron rods going down into the foundations of the granite building. In a week old Byles returned; he was clamped into the iron chair, the forceps connected with the machine attached firmly to the tooth, and Tushmaker, stationing himself in the rear, took hold of a lever four feet in length. He turned it slightly. Old Byles gave a groan and lifted his right leg. Another turn, another groan, and up went the leg again.

"What do you raise your leg for?" asked the Doctor.

"I can't help it," said the patient.

"Well," rejoined Tushmaker, "that tooth is bound to come out now."

He turned the lever clear around with a sudden jerk, and snapped old Byles's head clean and clear from his shoulders, leaving a space of four inches between the severed parts!

They had a *post-mortem* examination—the roots of the tooth were found extending down the right side, through the right leg, and turning up in two prongs under the sole of the right foot!

"No wonder," said Tushmaker, "he raised his right leg."

The jury thought so, too, but they found the roots much decayed; and five surgeons swearing that mortification would have ensued in a few months, Tushmaker was cleared on a verdict of "justifiable homicide."

He was a little shy of that instrument for some time afterward; but one day an old lady, feeble and flaccid, came in to have a tooth drawn, and thinking it would come out very easy, Tushmaker concluded, just by way of variety, to try the machine. He did so, and at the first turn drew the old lady's skeleton completely and entirely from her body, leaving her a mass of quivering jelly in her chair! Tushmaker took her home in a pillow-case.

The woman lived seven years after that, and they called her the "India-Rubber Woman." She had suffered terribly with the rheumatism, and after this occurrence never had a

pain in her bones. The dentist kept them in a glass case. After this, the machine was sold to the contractor of the Boston Custom-House, and it was found that a child of three years of age could, by a single turn of the screw, raise a stone weighing twenty-three tons. Smaller ones were made on the same principle and sold to the keepers of hotels and restaurants. They were used for boning turkeys. There is no moral to this story whatever, and it is possible that the circumstances may have become slightly exaggerated. Of course, there can be no doubt of the truth of the main incidents.

Bob Ingersoll relates an anecdote of a Hebrew who went into a restaurant to get his dinner. The devil of temptation whispered in his ear. "Bacon." He knew if there was anything that made Jehovah real white mad, it was to see anybody eating bacon; but he thought, "Maybe He is too busy watching sparrows and counting hairs to notice me," and so he took a slice. The weather was delightful when he went into the restaurant, but when he came out the sky was overcast, the lightning leaped from cloud to cloud, the earth trembled, and it was dark. He went back into the restaurant, trembling with fear, and, leaning over the counter, said to the clerk, "My God, did you ever hear such a fuss about a little piece of bacon?"

BRET HARTE

THE SOCIETY UPON THE STANISLAUS

I RESIDE at Table Mountain, and my name is
Truthful James;
I am not up to small deceit, or any sinful games;
And I'll tell in simple language what I know
about the row
That broke up our Society upon the Stanislow.

But first I would remark, that it is not a proper
plan
For any scientific gent to whale his fellow-man,
And, if a member don't agree with his peculiar
whim,
To lay for that same member for to "put a head"
on him.

Now, nothing could be finer or more beautiful
to see
Than the first six months' proceedings of that
same society,
Till Brown of Calaveras brought a lot of fossil
bones
That he found within a tunnel near the tenement
of Jones.

Then Brown he read a paper, and he recon-
structed there,

From those same bones an animal that was
extremely rare,
And Jones then asked the chair for a suspension
of the rules,
Till he could prove that those same bones was one
of his lost mules.

Then Brown he smiled a bitter smile, and said he
was at fault;
It seemed he had been trespassing on Jones's
family vault:
He was a most sarcastic man, this quiet Mr.
Brown,
And on several occasions he had cleaned out the
town.

Now, I hold it is not decent for a scientific gent
To say another is an ass—at least, to all intent;
Nor should the individual who happens to be
meant
Reply by heaving rocks at him to any great
extent.

Then Abner Dean of Angel's raised a point of
order—when
A chunk of old red sandstone took him in the
abdomen,
And he smiled a kind of sickly smile, and curled
up on the floor,
And the subsequent proceedings interested him
no more.

For, in less time than I write it, every member
did engage
In a warfare with the remnants of a palæozoic
age;
And the way they heaved those fossils in their
anger was a sin,
Till the skull of an old mammoth caved the head
of Thompson in.

And this is all I have to say of these improper
games,
For I live at Table Mountain, and my name is
Truthful James;
And I've told in simple language what I know
about the row
That broke up our Society upon the Stanislow.

A beginner in newspaper work in a Southern town, who occasionally sent "stuff" to one of the New York dailies, picked up last summer what seemed to him a "big story." Hurrying to the telegraph office he "queried" the telegraph editor: "Column story on so and so. Shall I send it?"

The reply was brief and prompt, but, to the enthusiast, unsatisfactory. "Send six hundred words," was all it said.

"Can't be told in less than twelve hundred," he wired back.

Before long the reply came: "Story of creation of world told in six hundred. Try it."

THE V-A-S-E

From the madding crowd they stand apart,
The maidens four and the Work of Art;

And none might tell from sight alone
In which had Culture ripest grown—

The Gotham Million fair to see,
The Philadelphia Pedigree,

The Boston Mind of azure hue,
Or the soulful Soul from Kalamazoo—

For all loved Art in a seemly way,
With an earnest soul and a capital A.

. . . . .

Long they worshiped; but no one broke
The sacred stillness, until up spoke

The Western one from the nameless place,
Who, blushing, said, "What a lovely vase!"

Over three faces a sad smile flew,
And they edged away from Kalamazoo.

But Gotham's haughty soul was stirred
To crush the stranger with one small word.

The V-a-s-e

Deftly hiding reproof in praise,
She cries, "'Tis, indeed, a lovely vase!"

But brief her unworthy triumph when
The lofty one from the house of Penn,

With the consciousness of two grandpapas,
Exclaims, "It is quite a lovely vahs!"

And glances round with an anxious thrill,
Awaiting the word of Beacon Hill.

But the Boston maid smiles courteouslee
And gently murmurs, "Oh, pardon me!

"I did not catch your remark, because
I was so entranced with that charming vaws!"

Dies erit prægelida
Sinistra quum Bostonia.

JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE.

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A Negro preacher addressed his flock with great earnestness on the subject of "Miracles" as follows: "My beloved friends, de greatest of all miracles was 'bout the loaves and fishes. Dey was five thousand loaves and two thousand fishes, and de twelve 'postles had to eat 'em all. De miracle is, dey didn't bust."

FRANK R. STOCKTON

POMONA'S NOVEL

It was in the latter part of August of that year that it became necessary for some one in the office in which I was engaged to go to St. Louis to attend to important business. Everything seemed to point to me as the fit person, for I understood the particular business better than any one else. I felt that I ought to go, but I did not altogether like to do it. I went home, and Euphemia and I talked over the matter far into the regulation sleeping hours.

There were very good reasons why we should go (for of course I would not think of taking such a journey without Euphemia). In the first place, it would be of advantage to me, in my business connection, to take the trip, and then it would be such a charming journey for us. We had never been west of the Alleghanies, and nearly all the country we would see would be new to us. We would come home by the Great Lakes, and Niagara, and the prospect was delightful to both of us. But then we would have to leave Rudder Grange for at least three weeks, and how could we do that?

This was indeed a difficult question to answer. Who could take care of our garden, our poultry,

our horse, and cow, and all their complicated belongings? The garden was in admirable condition. Our vegetables were coming in every day in just that fresh and satisfactory condition —altogether unknown to people who buy vegetables—for which I had labored so faithfully, and about which I had had so many cheerful anticipations. As to Euphemia's chicken-yard —with Euphemia away—the subject was too great for us. We did not even discuss it. But we would give up all the pleasures of our home for the chance of this most desirable excursion, if we could but think of some one who would come and take care of the place while we were gone. Rudder Grange could not run itself for three weeks.

We thought of every available person. Old John would not do. We did not feel that we could trust him. We thought of several of our friends; but there was, in both our minds, a certain shrinking from the idea of handing over the place to any of them for such a length of time. For my part, I said, I would rather leave Pomona in charge than any one else; but then Pomona was young and a girl. Euphemia agreed with me that she would rather trust her than any one else, but she also agreed in regard to the disqualifications. So when I went to the office the next morning we had fully determined to go on the trip, if we could find some one to take charge of our place while we were gone. When I returned from the office in

the afternoon I had agreed to go to St. Louis. By that time I had no choice in the matter unless I wished to interfere very much with my own interests. We were to start in two days. If in that time we could get any one to stay at the place, very well; if not, Pomona must assume the charge. We were not able to get any one, and Pomona did assume the charge. It is surprising how greatly relieved we felt when we were obliged to come to this conclusion. The arrangement was exactly what we wanted, and now that there was no help for it our consciences were easy.

We felt sure that there would be no danger to Pomona. Lord Edward would be with her, and she was a young person who was extraordinarily well able to take care of herself. Old John would be within call in case she needed him, and I borrowed a bulldog to be kept in the house at night. Pomona herself was more than satisfied with the plan.

We made out, the night before we left, a long and minute series of directions for her guidance in household, garden and farm matters, and directed her to keep a careful record of everything noteworthy that might occur. She was fully supplied with all the necessaries of life, and it has seldom happened that a young girl has been left in such a responsible and independent position as that in which we left Pomona. She was very proud of it. Our journey was ten times more delightful than we had expected it would be, and successful in every way, and yet although

we enjoyed every hour of the trip, we were no sooner fairly on our way home than we became so wildly anxious to get there that we reached Rudder Grange on Wednesday, whereas we had written that we would be home on Thursday. We arrived early in the afternoon and walked up from the station, leaving our baggage to be sent in the express wagon. As we approached our dear home we wanted to run, we were so eager to see it.

There it was, the same as ever. I lifted the gate-latch; the gate was locked. We ran to the carriage gate; that was locked, too. Just then I noticed a placard on the fence; it was not printed but the lettering was large, apparently made with ink and a brush. It read —

TO BE SOLD
FOR TAXES.

We stood and looked at each other. Euphemia turned pale.

"What does this mean?" said I. "Has our landlord——?"

I could say no more. The dreadful thought arose that the place might pass away from us. We were not yet ready to buy it. But I did not put the thought in words. There was a field next to our lot, and I got over the fence and helped Euphemia over. Then we climbed our side fence. This was more difficult, but we accomplished it without thinking much about its difficulties; our hearts were too full of painful apprehensions. I hurried to the front door; it

was locked. All the lower windows were shut. We went around to the kitchen. What surprised us more than anything else was the absence of Lord Edward. Had *he* been sold?

Before we reached the back part of the house Euphemia said she felt faint and must sit down. I led her to a tree nearby, under which I had made a rustic chair. The chair was gone. She sat on the grass, and I ran to the pump for some water. I looked for the bright tin dipper which always hung by the pump. It was not there. But I had a traveling cup in my pocket, and as I was taking it out I looked around me. There was an air of bareness over everything. I did not know what it all meant, but I know that my hand trembled as I took hold of the pump-handle and began to pump.

At the first sound of the pump-handle I heard a deep bark in the direction of the barn, and then furiously around the corner came Lord Edward.

Before I had filled the cup he was bounding about me. I believe the glad welcome of the dog did more to revive Euphemia than the water. He was delighted to see us, and in a moment up came Pomona, running from the barn. Her face was radiant, too. We felt relieved. Here were two friends who looked as if they were neither sold nor ruined.

Pomona quickly saw that we were ill at ease, and before I could put a question to her she divined the cause. Her countenance fell.

"You know," she said, "you said you wasn't

coming till to-morrow. If you only *had* come then—I was going to have everything just exactly right—an' now you had to climb in——"

And the poor girl looked as if she might cry, which would have been a wonderful thing for Pomona to do.

"Tell me one thing," said I. "What about —those taxes?"

"Oh, that's all right," she cried. "Don't think another minute about that. I'll tell you all about it soon. But come in first, and I'll get you some lunch in a minute."

We were somewhat relieved by Pomona's statement that it was "all right" in regard to the tax-poster, but we were very anxious to know all about the matter. Pomona, however, gave us little chance to ask her any questions.

As soon as she had made ready our lunch she asked us as a particular favor to give her three-quarters of an hour to herself, and then, said she, "I'll have everything looking just as if it was to-morrow."

We respected her feelings, for, of course, it was a great disappointment to her to be taken thus unawares, and we remained in the dining-room until she appeared and announced that she was ready for us to go about. We availed ourselves quickly of the privilege, and Euphemia hurried to the chicken-yard, while I bent my steps toward the garden and barn. As I went out I noticed that the rustic chair was in its place, and passing the pump I looked for the dipper It

was there. I asked Pomona about the chair, but she did not answer as quickly as was her habit.

"Would you rather," said she, "hear it altogether, when you come in, or have it in little bits, head and tail, all of a jumble?"

I called to Euphemia and asked her what she thought, and she was so anxious to get to her chickens that she said she would much rather wait and hear it all together. We found everything in perfect order—the garden was even free from weeds, a thing I had not expected. If it had not been for that cloud on the front fence, I should have been happy enough. Pomona had said it was all right, but she could not have paid the taxes—however, I would wait; and I went to the barn.

When Euphemia came in from the poultry-yard, she called me and said she was in a hurry to hear Pomona's account of things. So I went in, and we sat on the side porch, where it was shady, while Pomona, producing some sheets of foolscap paper, took her seat on the upper step.

"I wrote down the things of any account what happened," said she, "as you told me to, and while I was about it I thought I'd make it like a novel. It would be jus' as true, and p'r'aps more amusin'. I suppose you don't mind?"

No, we didn't mind. So she went on.

"I haven't got no name for my novel. I intended to think one out to-night. I wrote this all of nights. And I don't read the first chapters, for they tell about my birth and my parentage,

and my early adventures. I 'll just come down to what happened to me while you was away, because you 'll be more anxious to hear about that. All that 's written here is true, jus' the same as if I told it to you, but I 've put it into novel language because it comes easier to me."

And then, in a voice somewhat different from her ordinary tones, as if the "novel language" demanded it, she began to read:

"'Chapter Five. The Lonely House and the Faithful Friends. Thus was I left alone. None but two dogs to keep me com-pa-ny. I milk-ed the lowing kine and water-ed and fed the steed, and then, after my fru-gal repast, I clos-ed the man-si-on, shutting out all re-collections of the past and also foresights into the future. That night was a me-mor-able one. I slept soundly until the break of morn, but had the events transpired which afterward occur-red, what would have hap-pen-ed to me no tongue can tell. Early the next day nothing happen-ed. Soon after breakfast the vener-able John came to bor-row some ker-o-sene oil and a half pound of sugar, but his attempt was foil-ed. I knew too well the in-sid-i-ous foe. In the very out-set of his vil-la-in-y I sent him home with a empty can. For two long days I wan-der-ed amid the ver-dant pathways of the garden and to the barn, whenever and anon my du-ty call-ed me, nor did I ere neg-lect the fowlery. No cloud o'erspread this happy period of my life. But the cloud was ri-sing in the horizon although I saw it not.

"'It was about twenty-five minutes after eleven, on the morning of a Thursday, that I sat pondering in my mind the ques-ti-on what to do with the butter and the veg-e-tables. Here was butter, and here was green corn and lima beans and trophy tomats, far more than I ere could use. And here was a horse, idly cropping the fol-i-age in the field, for as my employer had advis-ed and order-ed, I had put the steed to grass. And here was a wagon, none too new, which had it the top taken off, or even the curtains roll-ed up, would do for a li-cen-sed vender. With the truck and butter, and mayhap some milk, I could load the wagon——'"

"Oh, Pomona," interrupted Euphemia, "you don't mean to say that you were thinking of doing anything like that?"

"Well, I was just beginning to think of it," said Pomona. "But I could n't have gone away and left the house. And you 'll see I didn't do it." And then she continued her novel. "'But, while my thoughts were thus employ-ed, I heard Lord Edward burst into bark-ter ——'"

At this Euphemia and I could not help bursting into laughter. Pomona did not seem at all confused, but went on with her reading.

"'I hurried to the door, and, looking out, I saw a wagon at the gate. Re-pair-ing there, I saw a man. Said he "Wilt open the gate?" I had fasten-ed up the gates and remov-ed every stealable ar-ticle from the yard.'"

Euphemia and I looked at each other. This explained the absence of the rustic seat and the dipper.

"'Thus, with my mind at ease, I could let my faith-ful fri-end, the dog, for he it was, roam with me through the grounds, while the fi-erce bull-dog guard-ed the man-si-on within. Then said I, quite bold unto him, "No. I let in no man here. My em-ploy-er and employ-er-ess are now from home. What do you want?" Then says he, as bold as brass, "I 've come to put the light-en-ing rods upon the house. Open the gate." "What rods?" says I. "The rods as was order-ed," says he. "Open the gate." I stood and gazed at him. Full well I saw through his pinch-beck mask. I knew his tricks. In the ab-sence of my em-ployer, he would put up rods and ever so many more than was wanted, and likely, too, some miserable trash that would attract the light-en-ing, instead of keep-ing it off. Then, as it would spoil the house to take them down, they would be kept, and pay demand-ed. "No, sir," says I. "No light-en-ing rods upon this house whilst I stand here," and with that I walk-ed away, and let Lord Edward loose. The man he storm-ed with pas-si-on. His eyes flash-ed fire. He would e'en have scal-ed the gate, but when he saw the dog he did forbear. As it was then near noon, I strode away to feed the fowls; but when I did return I saw a sight which froze the blood with-in my veins——"

"The dog did n't kill him?" cried Euphemia.

"Oh, no, ma'am," said Pomona. "You 'll see that that was n't it. 'At one cor-ner of the lot in front, a base boy, who had accompa-ni-ed this man, was banging on the fence with a long stick, and thus attrack-ing to hisself the rage of Lord Edward, while the vile intrig-er of a light-en-ing rodder had brought a lad-der to the other side of the house, up which he had now as-cend-ed, and was on the roof. What horrors fill-ed my soul! How my form trembl-ed!' This," continued Pomona, "is the end of the novel," and she laid her foolscap pages on the porch.

Euphemia and I exclaimed, with one voice, against this. We had just reached the most exciting part, and I added we had heard nothing yet about that affair of the taxes.

"You see, sir," said Pomona, "it took me so long to write out the chapters about my birth, my parentage, and my early adventures, that I hadn't time to finish up the rest. But I can tell you what happened after that just as well as if I had writ it out." And so she went on, much more glibly than before, with the account of the doings of the lightning-rod man.

"There was that wretch on top of the house, a-fixin' his old rods and hammerin' away for dear life. He'd brought his ladder over the side fence, where the dog, a-barkin' and plungin' at the boy outside, couldn't see him. I stood dumb for a minute, and then I know'd I had him. I rushed into the house, got a piece of well-rope, tied it to the bulldog's collar, an' dragged him

out and fastened him to the bottom rung of the ladder. Then I walks over to the front fence with Lord Edward's chain, for I knew that if he got at that bulldog there 'd be times, for they 'd never been allowed to see each other yet. So says I to the boy, 'I 'm goin' to tie up the dog, so you need n't be afraid of his jumpin' over the fence'—which he couldn't do, or the boy would have been a corpse for twenty minutes, or maybe half an hour. The boy kinder laughed, and said I needn't mind, which I didn't. Then I went to the gate, and I clicked to the horse which was standin' there, an' off he starts, as good as gold, an' trots down the road. The boy, he said somethin' or other pretty bad an' away he goes after him; but the horse was a-trottin' real fast, an' had a good start."

"How on earth could you ever think of doing such things?" said Euphemia. "That horse might have upset the wagon and broken all the lightning-rods, besides running over I don't know how many people."

"But you see, ma'am, that wasn't my lookout," said Pomona. "I was a-defendin' the house, and the enemy must expect to have things happen to him. So then I hears an awful row on the roof, and there was the man just coming down the ladder. He 'd heard the horse go off, and when he got about half-way down an' caught a sight of the bulldog, he was madder than ever you seed a lightnin'-rodder in all your born days. 'Take that dog off of there!' he yelled at me

'No, I won't,' says I. 'I never see a girl like you since I was born,' he screams at me. 'I guess it would 'a' been better fur you if you had,' says I; an' then he was so mad he could n't stand it any longer, and he comes down as low as he could, and when he saw just how long the rope was—which was pretty short—he made a jump and landed clear of the dog. Then he went on dreadful because he couldn't get at his ladder to take it away; and I wouldn't untie the dog, because if I had he'd 'a' torn the tendons out of that fellow's legs in no time. I never see a dog in such a boiling passion, and yet never making no sound at all but bloodcurdlin' grunts. An' I don't see how the rodder would 'a' got his ladder at all if the dog hadn't made an awful jump at him, and jerked the ladder down. It just missed your geranium-bed, and the rodder, he ran to the other end of it, and began pulling it away, dog and all. 'Look a-here,' says I, 'we can fix him now;' and so he cooled down enough to help me, and I unlocked the front door, and we pushed the bottom end of the ladder in, dog and all; an' then I shut the door as tight as it would go an' untied the end of the rope, an' the rodder pulled the ladder out while I held the door to keep the dog from follerin,' which he came pretty near doin', anyway. But I locked him in, and then the man began stormin' again about his wagon; but when he looked out an' see the boy comin' back with it—for somebody must 'a' stopped the horse—he stopped stormin' and went to put up

his ladder ag'in. 'No, you don't,' says I; 'I 'll let the big dog loose next time, and if I put him at the foot of your ladder you'll never come down.' 'But I want to go and take down what I put up,' he says; 'I ain't a-goin' on with this job.' 'No,' says I, 'you ain't; and you can't go up there to wrench off them rods and make rain-holes in the roof, neither.' He couldn't get no madder than he was then, an' fur a minute or two he could n't speak, an' then he says, 'I'll have satisfaction for this.' An' says I, 'How?' An' says he, 'You'll see what it is to interfere with a ordered job.' An' says I, 'There wasn't no order about it;' an' says he, 'I'll show you better than that;' an' he goes to his wagon an' gits a book, 'There,' says he, 'read that.' 'What of it?' says I; 'there's nobody of the name of Ball lives here.' That took the man kinder back, and he said he was told it was the only house on the lane, which I said was right, only it was the next lane he oughter 'a' gone to. He said no more after that, but just put his ladder in his wagon and went off. But I was not altogether rid of him. He left a trail of his baleful presence behind him.

"That horrid bulldog wouldn't let me come into the house! No matter what door I tried, there he was, just foamin' mad. I let him stay till nearly night, and then went and spoke kind to him; but it was no good. He 'd got an awful spite ag'in me. I found something to eat down cellar, and I made a fire outside an' roasted some corn and potatoes. That night I slep' in the

barn. I wasn't afraid to be away from the house for I knew it was safe enough, with that dog in it, and Lord Edward outside. For three days, Sunday an' all, I was kep' out of this house here. I got along pretty well with the sleepin' and the eatin', but the drinkin' was the worst. I couldn't get no coffee or tea; but there was plenty of milk.

"Why didn't you get some man to come and attend to the dog?" I asked. "It was dreadful to live in that way."

"Well, I didn't know no man that could do it," said Pomona. "The dog would 'a' been too much for old John, and besides, he was mad about the kerosene. Sunday afternoon, Captain Atkinson and Mrs. Atkinson and their little girl in a push-wagon come here, and I told 'em you was gone away; but they says they would stop a minute, and could I give them a drink; an' I had nothin' to give it them in but an old chicken-bowl that I had washed out, for even the dipper was in the house, an' I told 'em everything was locked up, which was true enough, though they must 'a' thought you was a queer kind of people; but I wasn't a-goin' to say nothin' about the dog, fur, to tell the truth, I was ashamed to do it. So as soon as they'd gone, I went down into the cellar—and it's lucky that I had the key for the outside cellar door—and I got a piece of fat corn-beef and the meat ax. I unlocked the kitchen door and went in, with the ax in one hand and the meat in the other. The dog might take his

choice. I know'd he must be pretty nigh famished, for there was nothin' that he could get at to eat. As soon as I went in, he came runnin' to me; but I could see he was shaky on his legs. He looked a sort of wicked at me, and then he grabbed the meat. He was all right then."

"Oh, my!" said Euphemia, "I am so glad to hear that. I was afraid you never got in. But we saw the dog—is he as savage yet?"

"Oh, no!" said Pomona; "nothin' like it."

"Look here, Pomona," said I, "I want to know about those taxes. When do they come into your story?"

"Pretty soon, sir," said she, and she went on:

"After that, I know d it wouldn't do to have them two dogs so that they'd have to be tied up if they see each other. Just as like as not I'd want them both at once, and then they'd go to fightin', and leave me to settle with some blood-thirsty lightnin'-rodder. So, as I know'd if they once had a fair fight and found out which was master, they'd be good friends afterward, I thought the best thing to do would be to let 'em fight it out, when there was nothin' else for 'em to do. So I fixed up things for the combat."

"Why, Pomona!" cried Euphemia, "I didn't think you were capable of such a cruel thing."

"It looks that way, ma'am, but really it ain't," replied the girl. "It seemed to me as if it would be a mercy to both of 'em to have the thing settled. So I cleared away a place in front of the woodshed and unchained Lord Edward,

and then I opened the kitchen door and called the bull. Out he came, with his teeth a-showin', and his bloodshot eyes, and his crooked front legs. Like lightnin' from the mount'in blast, he made one bounce for the big dog, and oh! what a fight there was! They rolled, they gnashed, they knocked over the wood-horse and sent chips a-flyin' all ways at onst. I thought Lord Edward would whip in a minute or two; but he didn't, for the bull stuck to him like a burr, and they was havin' it, ground and lofty, when I hears some one run up behind me, an' turnin' quick, there was the 'piscopalian minister. 'My! my! my!' he hollers, 'what an awful spectacle! Ain't there no way of stoppin' it?' 'No, sir,' says I, and I told him I didn't want to stop it and the reason why. 'Then,' says he, 'where's your master?' and I told him how you was away. 'Isn't there any man at all about?' says he. 'No,' says I. 'Then,' says he, 'if there's nobody else to stop it, I must do it myself.' An' he took off his coat. 'No,' says I, 'you keep back, sir. If there's anybody to plunge into that erena, the blood be mine'; an' I put my hand, without thinkin', ag'in his black shirt-bosom, to hold him back; but he didn't notice, bein' so excited. 'Now,' says I, 'jist wait one minute, and you'll see that bull's tail go between his legs. He's weakenin'.' An' sure enough, Lord Edward got a good grab at him, and was a-shakin' the very life out of him, when I run up and took Lord Edward by the

collar. 'Drop it!' says I; an' he dropped it, for he know'd he'd whipped, and he was pretty tired hisself. Then the bulldog, he trotted off with his tail a-hangin' down. 'Now, then,' says I, 'them dogs will be bosom friends forever after this.' 'Ah me!' says he, 'I'm sorry indeed that your employer, for whom I've always had a great respect, should allow you to get into such bad habits.

"That made me feel real bad, and I told him, mighty quick, that you was the last man in the world to let me do anything like that, and that if you'd a-been here you'd a-separated them dogs if they'd a-chawed your arms off; that you was very particular about such things, and that it would be a pity if he was to think you was a dog-fightin' gentleman, when I 'd often heard you say that, now you was fixed and settled, the one thing you would like most would be to be made a vestry-man."

I sat up straight in my chair.

"Pomona!" I exclaimed. "You didn't tell him that?"

"That's what I said, sir, for I wanted him to know what you really was; an' he says, 'Well, well, I never knew that. It might be a very good thing. I'll speak to some of the members about it. There's two vacancies now in our vestry.'"

I was crushed; but Euphemia tried to put the matter into the brightest light.

"Perhaps it may all turn out for the best," she

said, "and you may be elected, and that would be splendid. But it would be an awfully funny thing for a dog-fight to make you a vestry-man."

I could not talk on this subject. "Go on, Pomona," I said, trying to feel resigned to my shame, "and tell us about that poster on the fence."

"I'll be to that almost right away," she said.

"It was two or three days after the dog-fight that I was down at the barn, and happenin' to look over to old John's, I saw that tree-man there. He was a-showin' his book to John, and him and his wife and all the young ones was a-standin' there, drinkin' down them big peaches and pears as if they was all real. I know'd he'd come here ag'in, for them fellers never gives you up; and I didn't know how to keep him away, for I didn't want to let the dogs loose on a man what, after all, didn't want to do no more harm than to talk the life out of you. So I just happened to notice, as I came to the house, how kind of desolate everything looked, and I thought perhaps I might make it look worse, and he wouldn't care to deal here. So I thought of putting up a poster like that, for nobody whose place was a-goin' to be sold for taxes would be likely to want trees. So I run in the house, and wrote it quick and put it up. And sure enough, the man he came along soon and when he looked at that paper an' tried the gate, an' looked over the fence an' saw the house all shut up an' not a livin' soul about—for I had both the dogs in

the house with me—he shook his head an' walked off, as much as to say, 'if that man had fixed his place up proper with my trees he wouldn't a-come to this!' An' then, as I found the poster worked so good, I thought it might keep other people from comin' a-botherin' around, and so I left it up; but I was a-goin' to be sure and take it down before you came."

As it was now pretty late in the afternoon, I proposed that Pomona should postpone the rest of her narrative until evening. She said that there was nothing else to tell that was very particular; and I did not feel as if I could stand anything more just now, even if it was very particular.

When we were alone, I said to Euphemia:

"If we ever have to go away from this place again——"

"But we won't go away," she interrupted, looking up at me with as bright a face as she ever had; "at least, not for a long, long, long time to come.

"And I'm *so* glad you're to be a vestryman."

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"What was it the aeronaut said when he fell out of his balloon and struck the earth with his usual dull thud?"

"He remarked that it was a hard world."

JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE

FRED TROVER'S LITTLE IRON-CLAD

Did I never tell you the story? Is it possible? Draw up your chair. Stick of wood, Harry. Smoke?

You've heard of my Uncle Popworth, though. Why, yes! You've seen him—the eminently respectable elderly gentleman who came one day last summer just as you were going; book under his arm, you remember; weed on his hat; dry smile on bland countenance; tall, lank individual in very seedy black. With him my tale begins; for if I had never indulged in an Uncle Popworth I should never have sported an Iron-clad.

Quite right, sir; his arrival *was* a surprise to me. To know how great a surprise, you must understand why I left city, friends, business, and settled down in this quiet village. It was chiefly, sir, to escape the fascinations of that worthy old gentleman that I bought this place and took refuge here with my wife and little ones. Here we had respite, nepenthe from our memories of Uncle Popworth; here we used to sit down in the evenings and talk of the past with grateful and tranquil emotions, as people speak of awful things endured in days

that are no more. To us the height of human happiness was raising green corn and strawberries in a retired neighborhood where uncles were unknown. But, sir, when that Phantom, that Vampire, that Fate, loomed before my vision that day, if you had said, "Trover, I'll give ye sixpence for this neat little box of yours," I should have said, "Done!" with the trifling proviso that you should take my uncle in the bargain.

The matter with him? What, indeed, could invest human flesh with such terrors—what but this? he was—he is—let me shriek it in your ear—a bore—a BORE! of the most malignant type; an intolerable, terrible, unmitigated BORE!

That book under his arm was a volume of his own sermons—nine hundred and ninety-nine octavo pages, O Heaven! It wasn't enough for him to preach and repreach those appalling discourses, but then the ruthless man must go and print 'em! When I consider what booksellers—worthy men, no doubt, many of them, deserving well of their kind—he must have talked nearly into a state of syncope before ever he found one to give way, in a moment of weakness, of utter exhaustion and despair, and consent to publish him; and when I reflect what numbers of inoffensive persons, in the quiet walks of life, have been made to suffer the infliction of that Bore's Own Book, I pause, I stand aghast at the inscrutability of Divine Providence.

Don't think me profane, and don't for a moment imagine I underrate the function of the preacher. There's nothing better than a good sermon—one that puts new life into you. But what of a sermon that takes life out of you, instead of a spiritual fountain, a spiritual sponge that absorbs your powers of body and soul, so that the longer you listen the more you are impoverished? A merely poor sermon isn't so bad; you will find, if you are the right kind of a hearer, that it will suggest something better than itself; a good hen will lay to a bit of earthen. But the discourse of your ministerial vampire, fastening by some mystical process upon the hearer who has life of his own—though not every one has that—sucks and sucks and sucks; and he is exhausted while the preacher is refreshed. So it happens that your born bore is never weary of his own boring; he thrives upon it; while he seems to be giving, he is mysteriously taking in—he is drinking your blood.

But you say nobody is obliged to *read* a sermon. O my unsophisticated friend! if a man will put his thoughts—or his words, if thoughts are lacking—between covers—spread his banquet, and respectfully invite Public Taste to partake of it, Public Taste being free to decline, then your observation is sound. If an author quietly buries himself in his book—very good! *hic jacet*: peace to his ashes!

"The times have been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise again,"

as Macbeth observes, with some confusion of syntax, excusable in a person of his circumstances. Now, suppose they—or he—the man whose brains are out—goes about with his coffin under his arm, like my worthy uncle? and suppose he blandly, politely, relentlessly insists upon reading to you, out of that octavo sarcophagus, passages which in his opinion prove that he is not only not dead, but immortal? If such a man be a stranger, snub him; if a casual acquaintance, met in an evil hour, there is still hope—doors have locks, and there are two sides to a street, and nearsightedness is a blessing, and (as a last resort) buttons may be sacrificed (you remember Lamb's story of Coleridge) and left in the clutch of the fatal fingers. But one of your own kindred, and very respectable, adding the claim of misfortune to his other claims upon you—pachydermatous to slights, smilingly persuasive, gently persistent—as imperturbable as a ship's wooden figure-head through all the ups and downs of the voyage of life, and as insensible to cold water—in short, an uncle like my uncle, whom there was no getting rid of—what the deuce would you do?

Exactly; run away as I did. There was nothing else to be done, unless, indeed, I had throttled the old gentleman; in which case I am confident that one of our modern model juries would have brought in the popular verdict of justifiable insanity. But, being a peaceable

man, I was averse to extreme measures. So I did the next best thing—consulted my wife, and retired to this village.

Then consider the shock to my feelings when I looked up that day and saw the enemy of our peace stalking into our little Paradise with his book under his arm and his carpet-bag in his hand!—coming with his sermons and his shirts, prepared to stay a week—that is to say a year—that is to say forever, if we would suffer him—and how was he to be hindered by any desperate measures short of burning the house down?

"My dear nephew!" says he, striding toward me with eager steps, as you perhaps remember, smiling his eternally dry, leathery smile—"Nephew Frederick!"—and he held out both hands to me, book in one and bag in t'other—"I am rejoiced! One would almost think you had tried to hide away from your old uncle, for I've been three days hunting you up. And how is Dolly? She ought to be glad to see me after all the trouble I've had in finding you! And Nephew Frederick—h'm!—can you lend me three dollars for the hackman? For I don't happen to have—— Thank you! I should have been saved this if you had only known I was stopping last night at a public house in the next village, for I know how delighted you would have been to drive over and fetch me!"

If you were not already out of hearing, you may have noticed that I made no reply to this

affecting speech. The old gentleman has grown quite deaf of late years—an infirmity which was once a source of untold misery to his friends, to whom he was constantly appealing for their opinions, which they were obliged to shout in his ear. But now, happily, the world has about ceased responding to him, and he has almost ceased to expect responses from the world. He just catches your eye, and when he says, "Don't you think so, sir?" or "What is your opinion, sir?" an approving nod does your business.

The hackman paid, my dear uncle accompanied me to the house, unfolding the catalogue of his woes by the way. For he is one of those worthy, unoffending persons whom an ungrateful world jostles and tramples upon—whom unmerciful disaster follows fast and follows faster. In his younger days he was settled over I don't know how many different parishes; but secret enmity pursued him everywhere, poisoning the parochial mind against him, and driving him relentlessly from place to place. Then he relapsed into agencies, and went through a long list of them, each terminating in flat failure, to his ever-recurring surprise—the simple old soul never suspecting, to this day, who his one great tireless, terrible enemy is!

I got him into the library, and went to talk over this unexpected visit—or visitation—with Dolly. She bore up under it more cheerfully than could have been expected—suppressed a

sigh—and said she would go down and meet him. She received him with a hospitable smile (I verily believe that more of the world's hypocrisy proceeds from too much good-nature than from too little) and listened patiently to his explanations.

"You will observe that I have brought my bag," says he, "for I knew you wouldn't let me off for a day or two—though I must positively leave in a week—in two weeks, at the latest. I have brought my volume, too, for I am contemplating a new edition" (he is always contemplating a new edition, making that a pretext for lugging the book about with him), "and I wish to enjoy the advantages of your and Frederick's criticism. I anticipate some good, comfortable, old-time talks over the old book, Frederick!"

We had invited some village friends to come in and eat strawberries and cream with us that afternoon; and the question arose what should be done with the old gentleman? Harry, who is a lad of a rather lively fancy, coming in while we were taking advantage of his great-uncle's deafness to discuss the subject in his presence, proposed a pleasant expedient. "Trot him out into the cornfield, introduce him to the scarecrow, and let him talk to that," says he, grinning up into the visitor's face, who grinned down at him, no doubt thinking what a wonderfully charming boy he was! If he were as blind as he is deaf, he might have been disposed of very

comfortably in some such ingenious way—the scarecrow, or any other lay figure, might have served to engage him in one of his immortal monologues. As it was, the suggestion bore fruit later, as you will see.

While we were consulting—keeping up our scattering fire of small-arms under the old talker's heavy guns—our parish minister called, —old Doctor Wortleby, for whom we have a great liking and respect. Of course we had to introduce him to Uncle Popworth—for they met face to face; and of course Uncle Popworth fastened at once upon the brother clergyman. Being my guest, Wortleby could do no less than listen to Popworth, who is my uncle. He listened with interest and sympathy for the first half hour; and then continued listening for another half hour, after his interest and sympathy were exhausted. Then, attempting to go, he got his hat, and sat with it in his hand half an hour longer. Then he stood half an hour on his poor old gouty feet, desperately edging toward the door.

"Ah, certainly," says he, with a weary smile, repeatedly endeavoring to break the spell that bound him. "I shall be most happy to hear the conclusion of your remarks at some future time" (even ministers can lie out of politeness); "but just now——"

"One word more, and I am done," cries my Uncle Popworth, for the fiftieth time, and Wortleby, in despair, sat down again.

Then our friends arrived.

Dolly and I, who had all the while been benevolently wishing Wortleby would go, and trying to help him off, now selfishly hoped he would remain and share our entertainment—and our Uncle Popworth.

"I ought to have gone two hours ago," he said, with a plaintive smile, in reply to our invitation; "but, really, I am feeling the need of a cup of tea" (and no wonder!) "and I think I will stay."

We cruelly wished that he might continue to engage my uncle in conversation; but that would have been too much to hope from the sublime endurance of a martyr—if there ever was one more patient than he. Seeing the Lintons and the Greggs arrive, he craftily awaited his opportunity, and slipped off, to give them a turn on the gridiron. First Linton was secured; and you should have seen him roll his mute, appealing orbs, as he settled helplessly down under the infliction. Suddenly he made a dash. "I am ignorant of these matters," said he; "but Gregg understands them—Gregg will talk with you." But Gregg took refuge behind the ladies. The ladies, receiving a hint from poor distressed Dolly, scattered. But no artifice availed against the dreadful man. Piazza, parlor, garden—he ranged everywhere, and was sure to seize a victim.

At last tea was ready, and we all went in. The Lintons and Greggs were people of the

world, who would hardly have cared to wait for a blessing on such lovely heaps of strawberries, in mugs of cream they saw before them; but, there being two clergymen at the table, the ceremony was evidently expected. We were placidly seated; there was a hush, agreeably filled with the fragrance of the delicious fruit; even my Uncle Popworth, from long habit, turned off his talk at that suggestive moment; when I did what I thought a shrewd thing. I knew too well my relative's long-windedness at his devotions, as at everything else. (I wonder if Heaven itself isn't bored by such fellows!) I had suffered, I had seen my guests suffer, too much from him already—to think of deliberately yielding him a fearful advantage over us; so I coolly passed him by, and gave an expressive nod to the old Doctor.

Wortleby began; and I was congratulating myself on my adroit management of a delicate matter, when—conceive my consternation!—Popworth—not to speak it profanely—followed suit! The reverend egotist couldn't take in the possibility of anybody but himself being invited to say grace at our table, he being present—he hadn't noticed my nod to the Doctor, and the Doctor's low, earnest voice didn't reach him—and there, with one blessing going on one side of the table, he, as I said, pitched in on the other! His eyes shut, his hands spread over his plate, his elbows on the board, his head bowed, he took care that grace should

abound with us for once! His mill started, I knew there was no stopping it, and I hoped Wortleby would desist. But he didn't know his man. He seemed to feel that he had the stroke-oar, and he pulled away manfully. As Popworth lifted up his loud, nasal voice, the old Doctor raised his voice, in the vain hope, I suppose, of making himself heard by his lusty competitor. If you have never had two blessings running opposition at your table, in the presence of invited guests, you can never imagine how astounding, how killingly ludicrous it was! I felt that both Linton and Gregg were ready to tumble over, each in an apoplexy of suppressed emotions; while I had recourse to my handkerchief to hide my tears. At length, poor Wortleby yielded to fate—withdrew from the unequal contest—hauled off—for repairs, and the old seventy-two-gun ship thundered away in triumph.

At last (as there must be an end to everything under the sun) my uncle came to a close; and a moment of awful silence ensued, during which no man durst look at another. But in my weak and jelly-like condition I ventured a glance at him, and noticed that he looked up and around with an air of satisfaction at having performed a solemn duty in a becoming manner, blissfully unconscious of having run a poor brother off the track. Seeing us all with moist eyes and much affected—two or three handkerchiefs still going—he no doubt flattered

himself that the pathetic touches in his prayer had told.

This will give you some idea of the kind of man we had on our hands; and I won't risk making myself as great a bore as he is, by attempting a history of his stay with us; for I remember I set out to tell you about my little Iron-clad. I'm coming to that.

Suffice it to say, he stayed—he *stayed*—he STAYED!—five mortal weeks; refusing to take hints when they almost became kicks; driving our friends from us, and ourselves almost to distraction; his misfortunes alone protecting him from a prompt and vigorous elimination; when a happy chance helped me to a solution of this awful problem of destiny.

More than once I had recalled Harry's vivacious suggestion of the scarecrow—if one could only have been invented that would sit composedly in a chair and nod when spoken to! I was wishing for some such automaton, to bear the brunt of the boring with which we were afflicted, when one day there came a little man into the garden, where I had taken refuge.

He was a short, swarthy, foreign looking, diminutive, stiff, rather comical fellow—little figure mostly head, little head mostly face, little face mostly nose, which was by no means little—a sort of human vegetable (to my horticultural eye) running marvelously to seed in that organ. The first thing I saw, on looking up at the sound of footsteps, was the said nose coming toward

me, among the sweet-corn tassels. Nose of a decidedly Hebraic cast—the bearer respectably dressed, though his linen had an unwholesome sallowness, and his cloth a shiny, much-brushed, second-hand appearance.

Without a word he walks up to me, bows solemnly, and pulls from his pocket (I thought he was laying his hand on his heart) the familiar, much-worn weapon of his class—the folded, torn yellow paper, ready to fall to pieces as you open it—in short, the respectable beggar's certificate of character. With another bow (which gave his nose the aspect of the beak of a bird of prey making a pick at me) he handed me the document. I found that it was dated in Milwaukee, and signed by the mayor of that city, two physicians, three clergymen, and an editor, who bore united testimony to the fact that Jacob Menzel—I think that was his name—the bearer, anyway—was a deaf mute, and, considering that fact, a prodigy of learning, being master of no less than five different languages (a pathetic circumstance, considering that he was unable to speak one); moreover, that he was a converted Jew; and, furthermore, a native of Germany, who had come to this country in company with two brothers, both of whom had died of cholera in St. Louis, in one day; in consequence of which affliction, and his recent conversion, he was now anxious to return to the Fatherland, where he proposed to devote his life to the conversion of his brethren—the

upshot of all which was that good Christians and charitable souls everywhere were earnestly recommended to aid the said Jacob Menzel in his pious undertaking.

I was fumbling in my pocket for a little change wherewith to dismiss him—for that is usually the easiest way of getting off your premises and your conscience the applicant for "aid," who is probably an impostor, yet possibly not—when my eye caught the words (for I still held the document), "would be glad of any employment which may help to pay his way." The idea of finding employment for a man of such a large nose and little body, such extensive knowledge and diminutive legs—who had mastered five languages yet could not speak or understand a word of any one of them, struck me as rather pleasant, to say the least; yet, after a moment's reflection—wasn't he the very thing I wanted, the manikin, the target for my uncle?

Meanwhile he was scribbling rapidly on a small slate he had taken from his pocket. With another bow (as if he had written something wrong and was going to wipe it out with his nose), he handed me the slate, on which I found written in a neat hand half a dozen lines in as many different languages—English, Latin, Hebrew, German, French, Greek—each, as far as I could make out, conveying the cheerful information that he could communicate with me in that particular tongue. I tried him in English,

French and Latin, and I must acknowledge that he stood the test; he then tried me in Greek and Hebrew, and I as freely confess that I didn't stand the test. He smiled intelligently, nodded, and condescendingly returned to the English tongue, writing quickly, "I am a poor exile from Fatherland, and I much need friends."

I wrote: "You wish employment?"

He replied: "I shall be much obliged for any service I shall be capable to do," and passed me the slate with a hopeful smile.

"What can you do?" I asked.

He answered: "I copy the manuscripts, I translate from the one language to others with some perfect exactitude, I arrange the libraries, I make the catalogues, I am capable to be any secretary." And he looked up as if he saw in my eyes a vast vista of catalogues, manuscripts, libraries, and Fatherland at the end of it.

"How would you like to be companion to a literary man?" I inquired.

He nodded expressively, and wrote: "I should that like over all. But I speak and hear not."

"No matter," I replied. "You will only have to sit and appear to listen, and nod occasionally."

"You shall be the gentleman?" he asked, with a bright, pleased look.

I explained to him that the gentleman was an unfortunate connection of my family, whom we

could not regard as being quite in his right mind.

Jacob Menzel smiled, and touched his forehead interrogatively.

I nodded, adding on the slate, "He is perfectly harmless, but he can only be kept quiet by having some person to talk and read to. He will talk and read to you. He must not know you are deaf. He is very deaf himself and will not expect you to reply." And for a person wishing a light and easy employment, I recommended the situation.

He wrote at once, "How much you pay?"

"One dollar a day, and board you," I replied.

He of the nose nodded eagerly at that, and wrote, "Also you make to be washed my shirt?"

I agreed; and the bargain was closed. I got him into the house, and gave him a bath, a clean shirt, and complete instructions how to act.

The gravity with which he entered upon the situation was astonishing. He didn't seem to taste the slightest flavor of a joke in it at all. It was a simple matter of business; he saw in it only money and Fatherland.

Meanwhile I explained my intentions to Dolly, saying in great glee: "His deafness is his defense; the old three-decker may bang away at him; he is IRON-CLAD!" And that suggested the name we have called him by ever since.

When he was ready for action, I took him in

tow, and ran him in to draw the Popworth's fire—in other words, introduced him to my uncle in the library. The meeting of my tall, lank relative and the big-nosed little Jew was a spectacle to cure a hypochondriac! "Mr. Jacob Menzel—gentleman from Germany—traveling in this country," I yelled in the old fellow's ear. He of the diminutive legs and stupendous nose bowed with perfect decorum, and seated himself, stiff and erect, in the big chair I placed for him. The avuncular countenance lighted up; here were fresh woods and pastures new to that ancient shepherd. As for myself, I was well nigh strangled by a cough which just then seized me, and obliged to retreat—for I never was much of an actor, and the comedy of that first interview was overpowering.

As I passed the dining-room door, Dolly, who was behind it, gave my arm a fearful pinch that answered, I suppose, in the place of a scream, as a safety-valve for her hysterical emotions. "Oh, you cruel man—you miserable humbug!" says she; and went off into convulsions of laughter. The door was open, and we could see and hear everything.

"You are traveling, h'm?" says my uncle. The nose nodded duly. "H'm! I have traveled, myself," the old gentleman proceeded; "my life has been one of vicissitudes; h'm! I have journeyed, I have preached, I have published—perhaps you have heard of my literary venture" —and over went the big volume to the little

man, who took it, turned the leaves, and nodded and smiled, according to instructions.

"You are very kind to say so; thank you!" says my uncle, rubbing his husky hands with satisfaction. "Rejoiced to meet with you! It is always a gratification to have an intelligent and sympathizing brother to open one's mind to; it is especially refreshing to me, for, as I may say without egotism, my life and labors have *not* been appreciated."

From that the old interminable story took its start and flowed on, the faithful nose nodding assent at every turn in that winding stream.

The children came in for their share of the fun; and for the first time in our lives we took pleasure in the old gentleman's narration of his varied experiences.

"Oh, hear him! See him go it!" said Robbie. "What a nose!"

"Long may it wave!" said Harry.

With other remarks of a like genial nature; while there they sat, the two—my uncle on one side, long, lathy, self-satisfied, gesticulating, earnestly laying his case before a grave jury of one, whom he was bound to convince, if time would allow; my little Jew facing him, upright in his chair, stiff, imperturbable, devoted to business, honorably earning his money, the nose in the air, immovable, except when it played duly up and down at fitting intervals; in which edifying employment I left them and went about my business, a cheerier man.

Ah, what a relief it was to feel myself free for a season from the attacks of the enemy—to know that my plucky little Iron-clad was engaging him! In an hour I passed through the hall again, heard the loud, blatant voice still discoursing (it had got as far as the difficulties with the second parish), and saw the unflinching nasal organ perform its graceful seesaw of assent. An hour later it was the same—except that the speaker had arrived at the persecutions which drove him from parish number three. When I went to call them to dinner, the scene had changed a little, for now the old gentleman, pounding the table for a pulpit, was reading aloud passages from a powerful farewell sermon preached to his ungrateful parishioners. I was sorry I couldn't give my man a hint to use his handkerchief at the affecting periods, for the nose can be hardly called a sympathetic feature (unless, indeed, you blow it), and these nods were becoming rather too mechanical, except when the old gentleman switched off on the argumentative track, as he frequently did. "What think you of that?" he would pause in his reading to inquire. "Isn't that logic? Isn't that unanswerable?" In responding to which appeals nobody could have done better than my serious, my devoted, my lovely little Jew.

"Dinner!" I shouted over my uncle's dickey. It was almost the only word that had the magic in it to rouse him from the feast of reason which

his own conversation was to him. It was always easy to head him toward the dining-room—to steer him into port for necessary supplies. The little Iron-clad followed in his wake. At table the old gentleman resumed the account of his dealings with parish number three, and got on as far as negotiations with number four; occasionally stopping to eat his soup or roast beef very fast; at which time Jacob Menzel, who was very much absorbed in his dinner, but never permitted himself to neglect business for pleasure, paused at the proper intervals with his spoon or fork half-way to his mouth, and nodded—just as if my uncle had been speaking—yielding assent to his last remarks after mature consideration, no doubt the old gentleman thought.

The fun of the thing wore off after a while, and then we experienced the solid advantages of having an Iron-clad in the house. Afternoon—evening—the next day—my little man of business performed his function promptly and assiduously. But in the afternoon of the second day he began to change perceptibly. He wore an aspect of languor and melancholy that alarmed me. The next morning he was pale, and went to his work with an air of sorrowful resignation.

"He is thinking of Fatherland," said the sympathizing Dolly; while Harry's less-refined but more sprightly comment was, that the nose had about played out.

Indeed, it had almost ceased to wave; and I feared that I was about to lose a most valuable servant, whose place it would be impossible to fill. Accordingly, I wrote on a slip of paper, which I sent in to him:

"You have done well, and I raise your salary to a dollar and a quarter a day. Your influence over our unfortunate relative is soothing and beneficial. Go on as you have begun and merit the lasting gratitude of an afflicted family."

That seemed to cheer him a little—to wind him up, as Harry said, and set the pendulum swinging again. But it was not long before the listlessness and low spirits returned; Menzel showed a sad tendency to shirk his duty; and before noon there came a crash.

I was in the garden, when I heard a shriek of rage and despair, and saw the little Jew coming toward me with frantic gestures.

"I yielt! I abandone! I take my moneys and my shirt, and I go!" says he.

I stood in perfect astonishment at hearing the dumb speak; while he threw his arms wildly above his head, exclaiming:

"I am not teaf! I am not teaf! I am not teaf! He is one terreeble mon! He vill haf my life! So I go—I fly—I take my moneys and my shirt—I leafe him, I leafe your house! I vould earn honest living, but —*Gott im himmel! Dieu des dieux!* All de devils!" he shrieked, mixing up several of his languages at once, in his violent mental agitation.

"Jacob Menzel!" said I solemnly, "I little thought I was having to do with an impostor!"

"If I haf you deceive, I haf myself more dan punish!" was his reply. "Now I resign de position. I ask for de moneys and de shirt, and I part!"

Just then my uncle came up, amazed at his new friend's sudden revolt and flight, and anxious to finish up with his seventh parish.

"I vill hear no more of your six, of your seven—I know not how many parish!" screamed the furious little Jew, turning on him.

"What means all this?" said my bewildered uncle.

"I tell you vat means it all!" the vindictive little impostor, tiptoeing up to him, yelled at his cheek. "I make not vell my affairs in your country; I vould return to Faderlant; for convenience I carry dis papper. I come here; I am suppose teaf; I accept de position to be your companion, for if a man hear, you kill him tead soon vid your book and your ten, twenty parish! I hear! You kill me! and I go!"

And, having obtained his "moneys" and his shirt, he went. That is the last I ever saw of my little Iron-clad. I remember him with gratitude, for he did me good service, and he had but one fault, namely, that he was *not* iron-clad!

As for my uncle, for the first time in his life, I think, he said never a word, but stalked into the house. Dolly soon came running out to

ask what was the matter; Popworth was actually packing his carpet-bag! I called Andrew, and ordered him to be in readiness with the buggy to take the old gentleman over to the railroad.

"What! Going?" I cried, as my uncle presently appeared, bearing his book and his baggage.

"Nephew Frederick," said he, "after this treatment, can you ask me if I am going?"

"Really," I shouted, "it is not my fault that the fellow proved an impostor. I employed him with the best of intentions, for your—and our —good!"

"Nephew Frederick," said he, "this is insufferable; you will regret it! I shall never—NEVER" (as if he had been pronouncing my doom) "accept of your hospitalities again!"

He did, however, accept some money which I offered him, and likewise a seat in the buggy. I watched his departure with joy and terror—for at any moment he might relent and stay; nor was I at ease in my mind until I saw Andrew come riding back alone.

We have never seen the old gentleman since. But last winter I received a letter from him; he wrote in a forgiving tone, to inform me that he had been appointed chaplain in a prison, and to ask for a loan of money to buy a suit of clothes. I sent him fifty dollars and my congratulations. I consider him eminently qualified to fill the new situation. As a hardship, he can't be beat; and what are the rogues sent to prison for but to suffer punishment?

Yes, it would be a joke if my little Iron-clad should end his career of imposture in that public institution, and sit once more under my excellent uncle! But I can't wish him any such misfortune. His mission to us was one of mercy. The place has been Paradise again, ever since his visit.—*Scribner's Magazine*, August, 1873.

A BOSTON LULLABY

Doff thy new spectacles,
  Peregrine, darling one;
Minds are but obstacles
  When work is overdone.
Lullaby, hushaby, slumber thou festinate,
Hushaby, lullaby, never procrastinate.

Lay down thy Ibsen, dear,
  Browning and Emerson;
Sealed be thy cultured ear,
  Save to my benison.
Lullaby, hushaby, cherish obedience.
Hushaby, lullaby, captivate somnolence.

Dream thou of Lohengrin,
  Siegfried, Brünnhilde fair;
Banish, my Peregrine,
  Thoughts of the Pilgrims spare.
Lullaby, hushaby, sleep, dear, till night is done
Hushaby, lullaby, mother's phenomenon.

ROBERT JONES BURDETTE

THE ARTLESS PRATTLE OF CHILDHOOD

We always did pity a man who does not love childhood. There is something morally wrong with such a man. If his tenderest sympathies are not awakened by their innocent prattle, if his heart does not echo their merry laughter, if his whole nature does not reach out in ardent longing after their pure thoughts and unselfish impulses, he is a sour, crusty, crabbed old stick and the world full of children has no use for him. In every age and clime the best and noblest men loved children. Even wicked men have a tender spot left in their hardened hearts for little children. The great men of the earth love them. Dogs love them. Kamehame Kemokimodahroah, the King of the Cannibal Islands, loves them. Rare and no gravy. Ah, yes, we all love children.

And what a pleasure it is to talk with them! Who can chatter with a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, quick-witted little darling, anywhere from three to five years, and not appreciate the pride which swells a mother's breast when she sees her little ones admired? Ah, yes, to be sure.

One day—ah, can we ever cease to remember

that dreamy, idle summer afternoon—a lady friend, who was down in the city on a shopping excursion, came into the sanctum with her little son, a dear little tid-toddler of five bright summers, and begged us to amuse him while she pursued the duties which called her down-town. Such a bright boy; so delightful it was to talk to him. We can never forget the blissful half-hour we spent booking that prodigy up in his centennial history.

"Now, listen, Clary," we said—his name was Clarence Fitzherbert Alencon de Marchemont Caruthers—"and learn about George Washington."

"Who's he?" inquired Clarence, etc.

"Listen," we said; "he was the father of his country."

"Whose country?"

"Ours—yours and mine; the confederated union of the American people, cemented with the life-blood of the men of '76, poured out upon the altars of our country as the dearest libation to Liberty that her votaries can offer."

"Who did?" asked Clarence.

There is a peculiar tact in talking to children that very few people possess. Now, most people would have grown impatient and lost their temper when little Clarence asked so many irrelevant questions, but we did not. We knew that, however careless he might appear at first, we could soon interest him in the story, and he would be all eyes and ears. So we smiled

sweetly—that same sweet smile which you may have noticed on our photographs. Just the faintest ripple of a smile breaking across the face like a ray of sunlight, and checked by lines of tender sadness just before the two ends of it pass each other at the back of the neck.

And so, smiling, we went on.

"Well, one day George's father——"

"George who?" asked Clarence.

"George Washington. He was a little boy then, just like you. One day his father ——"

"Whose father?" demanded Clarence, with an encouraging expression of interest.

"George Washington's—this great man we were telling you of. One day George Washington's father gave him a little hatchet for a——"

"Gave who a little hatchet?" the dear child interrupted with a gleam of bewitching intelligence. Most men would have betrayed signs of impatience, but we didn't. We know how to talk to children, so we went on.

"George Washington. His——"

"Who gave him the little hatchet?"

"His father. And his father——"

"Whose father?"

"George Washington's."

"Oh!"

"Yes, George Washington. And his father told him——"

"Told who?"

"Told George."

"Oh, yes, George."

And we went on, just as patient and as pleasant as you could imagine. We took up the story right where the boy interrupted; for we could see that he was just crazy to hear the end of it. We said:

"And he told him that——"

"Who told him what?" Clarence broke in.

"Why, George's father told George."

"What did he tell him?"

"Why, that's just what I'm going to tell you. He told him——"

"Who told him?"

"George's father. He——"

"What for?"

"Why, so he wouldn't do what he told him not to do. He told him——"

"George told him?" queried Clarence.

"No, his father told George——"

"Oh!"

"Yes; told him that he must be careful with the hatchet——"

"Who must be careful?"

"George must."

"Oh!"

"Yes; must be careful with the hatchet——"

"What hatchet?"

"Why, George's."

"Oh!"

"Yes; with the hatchet, and not cut himself with it, or drop it in the cistern, or leave it out in the grass all night. So George went round cutting everything he could reach with his

hatchet. At last he came to a splendid apple tree, his father's favorite, and cut it down and——"

"Who cut it down?"

"George did."

"Oh!"

"—but his father came home and saw it the first thing, and——"

"Saw the hatchet?"

"No; saw the apple tree. And he said, 'Who has cut down my favorite apple tree?'"

"What apple tree?"

"George's father's. And everybody said they didn't know anything about it, and——"

"Anything about what?"

"The apple tree."

"Oh!"

"—and George came up and heard them talking about it——"

"Heard who talking about it?"

"Heard his father and the men."

"What was they talking about?"

"About this apple tree."

"What apple tree?"

"The favorite apple tree that George cut down."

"George who?"

"George Washington."

"Oh!"

"So George came up and heard them talking about it, and he——"

"What did he cut it down for?"

"Just to try his little hatchet."

"Whose little hatchet?"

"Why, his own; the one his father gave him."

"Gave who?"

"Why, George Washington."

"Who gave it to him?"

"His father did."

"Oh!"

"So George came up and he said, 'Father, I cannot tell a lie. I——'"

"Who couldn't tell a lie?"

"Why, George Washington. He said, 'Father, I cannot tell a lie. It was——'"

"His father couldn't?"

"Why, no; George couldn't."

"Oh, George? Oh, yes."

"'—it was I cut down your apple tree. I did——'"

"His father did?"

"No, no. It was George said this."

"Said he cut his father?"

"No, no, no; said he cut down his apple tree."

"George's apple tree?"

"No, no; his father's."

"Oh!"

"He said——"

"His father said?"

"No, no, no; George said, 'Father, I cannot tell a lie. I did it with my little hatchet.' And his father said, 'Noble boy, I would rather lose a thousand trees than have you tell a lie.'"

"George did?"

"No; his father said that."

"Said he'd rather have a thousand apple trees?"

"No, no, no; said he'd rather lose a thousand apple trees than——"

"Said he'd rather George would?"

"No; said he'd rather he would than have him lie."

"Oh, George would rather have his father lie?"

We are patient, and we love children, but if Mrs. Caruthers, of Arch Street, hadn't come and got her prodigy at this critical juncture, we don't believe all Burlington could have pulled us out of that snarl. And as Clarence Fitzherbert Alencon de Marchemont Caruthers patted down the stairs, we heard him telling his ma about a boy who had a father named George, and he told him to cut down an apple tree, and he said he'd rather tell a thousand lies than cut down one apple tree.

In the House of Representatives one day Mr. Springer was finishing an argument and ended by saying, "I am right, I know I am; and I would rather be right than be President." He stood near the late S. S. Cox, who looked mischievously across at him and said as he ended, "Don't worry about that, Springer; you'll never be either."

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

Behold the mansion reared by dedal Jack.

See the malt stored in many a plethoric sack,
In the proud cirque of Ivan's bivouac.

Mark how the rat's felonious fangs invade
The golden stores in John's pavilion laid.

Anon with velvet foot and Tarquin strides
Subtle grimalkin to his quarry glides—
Grimalkin grim that slew the fierce rodent
Whose tooth insidious Johann's sackcloth rent.

Lo! now the deep-mouthed canine foe's assault,
That vexed the avenger of the stolen malt,
Stored in the hallowed precincts of that hall
That rose complete at Jack's creative call.

Here stalks the impetuous cow with crumpled horn
Whereon the exacerbating hound was torn,
Who bayed the feline slaughter-beast that slew
The rat predacious, whose keen fangs ran through
The textile fibers that involved the grain
Which lay in Hans's inviolate domain.

Here walks forlorn the damsel crowned with rue,
Lactiferous spoils from vaccine drugs who drew
Of that corniculate beast whose tortuous horn
Tossed to the clouds in fierce, vindictive scorn
The harrowing hound whose braggart bark and stir
Arched the lithe spine and reared the indignant fur
Of puss, that with verminicidal claw
Struck the weird rat in whose insatiate maw
Lay reeking malt that erst in Juan's courts we saw.

Robed in senescent garb that seems in sooth
Too long a prey to Chronos's iron tooth,
Behold the man whose amorous lips incline,
Full with Eros's osculative sign,
To the lorn maiden whose lactalbic hands
Drew albu-lactic bovine wealth from lacteal glands
Of that immortal bovine, by whose horn
Distort to realm ethereal was borne
The beast catulean, vexed of the sly
Ulysses quadrupedal, who made die
The old mordacious rat that dared devour
Antecedaneous ale in John's domestic bower.

Lo! here, with hirsute honors doffed, succinct
Of saponaceous locks, the priest who linked
In Hymen's golden bands the torn unthrift,
Whose means exiguous stared through many a rift,

Even as he kissed the virgin all forlorn,
Who milked the cow with implicated horn,
Who in fine wrath the canine torturer skied,
That dared to vex the insidious muricide,
Who let auroral effluence through the pelt
Of the sly rat that robbed the palace Jack had
built.

The loud cantankerous Shanghai comes at last,
Whose shouts aroused the shorn ecclesiast.
Who sealed the vows of Hymen's sacrament,
To him, who, robed in garments indigent,
Exosculates the damsel lachrymose,
The emulgator of that horned brute morose,
That tossed the dog, that worried the cat, that
kilt
The rat that ate the malt that lay in the house
that Jack built.

The late Mr. William R. Travers liked Bermuda enormously, but it would seem that he found its comforts not altogether unalloyed. A friend who once visited him there was congratulating him on his improved appearance.

"This is a grand place for change and rest," said his friend. "Just what you needed."

"Yes," replied Mr. Travers, sadly. "Th-th-this is a magn-ni-ni-nif-ficent place f-f-f-for b-b-both. The ni-ni-niggers look out f-f-f-for the ch-ch-ch-*change*, and the hotel ke-ke-keepers take th-th-the *rest.*"

JOSEPH BERT SMILEY

ST. PETER AT THE GATE

St. Peter stood guard at the golden gate
With a solemn mien and an air sedate,
When up to the top of the golden stair
A man and a woman ascending there,
Applied for admission. They came and stood
Before St. Peter, so great and good,
In hopes the City of Peace to win—
And asked St. Peter to let them in.
The woman was tall, and lank, and thin,
With a scraggy beadlet upon her chin,
The man was short, and thick and stout,
His stomach was built so it rounded out,
His face was pleasant, and all the while
He wore a kindly and genial smile.
The choirs in the distance the echoes woke
And the man kept still while the woman spoke:
"Oh, thou who guardest the gate," said she,
"We two come hither beseeching thee
To let us enter the heavenly land,
And play our harps with the angel band.
Of me, St. Peter, there is no doubt—
There is nothing from heaven to bar me out;
I have been to meetings three times a week,
And almost always I'd rise and speak.
I've told the sinners about the day
When they'd repent their evil way;

St. Peter at the Gate

I have told my neighbors, I have told them all
'Bout Adam and Eve, and the primal fall;
I've shown them what they'd have to do
If they'd pass in with the chosen few;
I've marked their path of duty clear—
Laid out the plan for their whole career;
I've talked and talked to 'em, loud and long,
For my lungs are good and my voice is strong.
So good St. Peter, you'll clearly see
The gate of heaven is open to me;
But my old man, I regret to say,
Hasn't walked exactly the narrow way—
He smokes and he swears, and grave faults he's got,
And I don't know whether he will pass or not.
He never would pray with an earnest vim,
Or go to revival, or join in a hymn,
So I had to leave him in sorrow there
While I, with the chosen, united in prayer.
He ate what the pantry chanced to afford,
While I, in purity, sang to the Lord;
And if cucumbers were all he got
It's a chance if he merited them or not.
But oh, St. Peter, I love him so!
To the pleasures of heaven please let him go!
I've done enough—a saint I've been—
Won't that atone? Can't you let him in?
By my grim gospel I know 'tis so
That the unrepentant must fry below;
But isn't there some way that you can see,
That he may enter who's dear to me?
It's a narrow gospel by which I pray,

But the chosen expect to find some way
Of coaxing, or fooling, or bribing you
So that their relation can amble through.
And say, St. Peter, it seems to me
This gate isn't kept as it ought to be;
You ought to stand by that opening there,
And never sit down in that easy chair.
And say, St. Peter, my sight is dimmed,
But I don't like the way your whiskers are trimmed,
They're cut too wide and outward toss;
They'd look better narrower, cut straight across.
Well, we must be going our crowns to win.
So open St. Peter, and we'll pass in."
St. Peter sat quiet and stroked his staff;
But spite of his office he had to laugh;
Then said with a fiery gleam in his eye,
"Who's tending this gateway—you or I?"
And then he rose in stature tall,
And pressed a button upon the wall,
And said to the imp who answered the bell,
"Escort this lady around to hell!"
The man stood still as a piece of stone—
Stood sadly, gloomily there alone,
A life-long, settled idea he had
That his wife was good and he was bad.
He thought if the woman went down below
That he would certainly have to go—
That if she went to the regions dim
There wasn't a ghost of a show for him.
Slowly he turned, by habit bent,
To follow wherever the woman went.

St. Peter at the Gate

St. Peter, standing on duty there,
Observed that the top of his head was bare.
He called the gentleman back and said,
"Friend, how long have you been wed?"
"Thirty years" (with a weary sigh),
And then he thoughtfully added, "Why?"
St. Peter was silent. With head bent down
He raised his hand and scratched his crown;
Then, seeming a different thought to take,
Slowly, half to himself he spake:
"Thirty years with that woman there?
No wonder the man hasn't any hair!
Swearing is wicked, smoke's not good.
He smoked and swore—I should think he would.
Thirty years with that tongue so sharp!
Ho, Angel Gabriel! Give him a harp!
A jeweled harp with a golden string,
Good, sir, pass in where the angels sing!
Gabriel, give him a seat alone—
One with a cushion, up near the throne;
Call up some angels to play their best,
Let him enjoy the music in rest,
See that on finest ambrosia he feeds,
He's had about all the hell he needs;
It isn't just hardly the thing to do
To roast him on earth and the future, too."
They gave him a harp with golden strings,
A glittering robe with a pair of wings,
And he said, as he entered the Realm of Day,
"Well, this beats cucumber, any way!"
And so the Scriptures had come to pass
"The last shall be first and the first shall be last."

HENRY GUY CARLETON

THE THOMPSON STREET POKER CLUB

SOME CURIOUS POINTS IN THE NOBLE GAME UNFOLDED

When Mr. Tooter Williams entered the gilded halls of the Thompson Street Poker Club Saturday evening it was evident that fortune had smeared him with prosperity. He wore a straw hat with a blue ribbon, an expression of serene content, and a glass amethyst on his third finger whose effulgence irradiated the whole room and made the envious eyes of Mr. Cyanide Whiffles stand out like a crab's. Besides these extraordinary furbishments, Mr. Williams had his mustache waxed to fine points and his back hair was precious with the luster and richness which accompany the use of the attar of Third Avenue roses combined with the bear's grease dispensed by basement barbers on that fashionable thoroughfare.

In sharp contrast to this scintillating entrance was the coming of the Reverend Mr. Thankful Smith, who had been disheveled by the heat, discolored by a dusty evangelical trip to Coney Island, and oppressed by an attack of malaria which made his eyes bloodshot and enriched

his respiration with occasional hiccoughs and that steady aroma which is said to dwell in Weehawken breweries.

The game began at eight o'clock, and by nine and a series of two-pair hands and bull luck Mr. Gus Johnson was seven dollars and a nickel ahead of the game, and the Reverend Mr. Thankful Smith, who was banking, was nine stacks of chips and a dollar bill on the wrong side of the ledger. Mr. Cyanide Whiffles was cheerful as a cricket over four winnings amounting to sixty-nine cents; Professor Brick was calm, and Mr. Tooter Williams was gorgeous and hopeful, and laying low for the first jack-pot, which now came. It was Mr. Whiffles' deal, and feeling that the eyes of the world were upon him, he passed around the cards with a precision and rapidity which were more to his credit than the I. O. U. from Mr. Williams which was left over from the previous meeting.

Professor Brick had nine high and declared his inability to make an opening.

Mr. Williams noticed a dangerous light come into the Reverend Mr. Smith's eye and hesitated a moment, but having two black jacks and a pair of trays, opened with the limit.

"I liffs yo' jess tree dollahs, Toot," said the Reverend Mr. Smith, getting out the wallet and shaking out a wad.

Mr. Gus Johnson, who had a four flush and very little prudence, came in. Mr. Whiffles sighed and fled.

Mr. Williams polished the amethyst, thoroughly examining a scratch on one of its facets, adjusted his collar, skinned his cards, stealthily glanced again at the expression of the Reverend Mr. Smith's eye, and said he would "Jess—jess call."

Mr. Whiffles supplied the wants of the gentlemen from the pack with the mechanical air of a man who had lost all hope in a hereafter. Mr. Williams wanted one card, the Reverend Mr. Smith said he'd take about three and Mr. Gus Johnson expressed a desire for a club, if it was not too much trouble.

Mr. Williams caught another tray, and, being secretly pleased, led out by betting a chip. The Reverend Mr. Smith uproariously slammed down a stack of blue chips and raised him seven dollars.

Mr. Gus Johnson had captured the nine of hearts and so retired.

Mr. Williams had four chips and a dollar left. "I sees dat seven," he said impressively, "an' I humps it ten mo'."

"Whar's de c'lateral?" queried the Reverend Mr. Smith calmly, but with aggressiveness in his eye.

Mr. Williams sniffed contemptuously, drew off the ring, and deposited it in the pot with such an air as to impress Mr. Whiffles with the idea that the jewel must have been worth at least four million dollars. Then Mr. Williams leaned back in his chair, and smiled.

"Whad yer goin' ter do?" asked the Reverend

Mr. Smith, deliberately ignoring Mr. Williams's action.

Mr. Williams pointed to the ring and smiled. "Liff yo' ten dollahs."

"On whad?"

"Dat ring."

"*Dat* ring?"

"Yezzah." Mr. Williams was still cool.

"Huh!" The Reverend Mr. Smith picked the ring up, examined it scientifically with one eye closed, dropped it several times as if to test its soundness, and then walked across and rasped it several times heavily on the window pane.

"Whad yo' doin' dat for?" excitedly asked Mr. Williams.

A double rasp with the ring was the Reverend Mr. Smith's only reply.

"Gimme dat jule back!" demanded Mr. Williams.

The Reverend Mr. Smith was now vigorously rubbing the setting of the stone on the floor.

"Leggo dat sparkler," said Mr. Williams again.

The Reverend Mr. Smith carefully polished off the scratches by rubbing the ring awhile on the sole of his foot. Then he resumed his seat and put the precious thing back into the pot. Then he looked calmly at Mr. Williams, and leaned back in his chair as if waiting for something.

"Is yo' satisfied?" said Mr. Williams, in the tone used by men who have sustained a deep injury.

"Dis is pokah," said the Reverend Mr. Thankful Smith.

"I rised yo' ten dollahs," said Mr. Williams, pointing to the ring.

"Did yo' ever saw three balls hangin' over my do'?" asked the Reverend Mr. Smith. "Doesn't yo' know my name hain't Oppenheimer?"

"Whad yo' mean?" asked Mr. Williams excitedly.

"Pokah am pokah, and dar's no 'casion fer triflin' wif blue glass 'n junk in dis yar club," said the Reverend Mr. Smith.

"I liffs yo' ten dollahs," said Mr. Williams, ignoring the insult.

"Pud up de c'lateral," said the Reverend Mr. Smith. "Fo' chips is fohty, 'n a dollah's a dollah fohty, 'n dat's a dollah fohty-fo' cents."

"Whar's de fo' cents?" smiled Mr. Williams, desperately.

The Reverend Mr. Smith pointed to the ring. Mr. Williams rose indignantly, shucked off his coat, hat, vest, suspenders and scarfpin, heaped them on the table and then sat down and glared at the Reverend Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith rolled up the coat, put on the hat, threw his own out of the window, gave the ring to Mr. Whiffles, jammed the suspenders into his pocket, and took in the vest, chips and money.

"Dis yar's buglry!" yelled Mr. Williams.

The Reverend Mr. Smith spread out four eights and rose impressively.

"Toot," he said, "doan trifle wif Prov'dence. Because a man wars ten cent grease 'n' gits his july on de Bowery, hit's no sign dat he kin buck agin cash in a jacker 'n' git a boodle from fo' eights. Yo's now in yo' shirt sleeves 'n' low sperrets, bud de speeyunce am wallyble. I'se willin' ter stan' a beer an' sassenger, 'n' shake 'n' call it squar'. De club 'll now 'journ."

Mr. Blaine used to tell this story:

Once in Dublin, toward the end of the opera, Satan was conducting Faust through a trap-door which represented the gates of Hades. His Majesty got through all right—he was used to going below—but Faust, who was quite stout, got only about half-way in and no squeezing would get him any farther. Suddenly an Irishman in the gallery exclaimed, devoutly, "Thank God, hell is full."

While Mark Twain was ill in London a report that he had died was circulated. It spread to America, and reached Charles Dudley Warner in Hartford, Connecticut. Mr. Warner immediately cabled to London to find out if it was really so. The cablegram in some way came directly into the humorist's hands, and he forthwith cabled the following reply: "Reports of my death greatly exaggerated."

THE FOX AND THE CROW

A Crow, having secured a Piece of Cheese, flew with its Prize to a lofty Tree, and was preparing to devour the Luscious Morsel, when a crafty Fox, halting at the foot of the Tree, began to cast about how he might obtain it.

"How tasteful is your Dress," he cried, in well-feigned Ecstacy; "it cannot surely be that your Musical Education has been neglected? Will you not oblige——?"

"I have a horrid Cold," replied the Crow, "and never sing without my Music; but since you press me—at the same time, I should add that I have read Æsop, and been there before."

So saying, she deposited the Cheese in a safe Place on the Limb of the Tree, and favored him with a Song.

"Thank you," exclaimed the Fox, and trotted away, with the Remark that Welsh Rabbits never agreed with him, and were far inferior in Quality to the animate Variety.

Moral—The foregoing fable is supported by a whole Gatling Battery of Morals. We are taught (1) that it Pays to take the Papers; (2) that Invitation is not Always the Sincerest Flattery; (3) that a Stalled Rabbit with Contentment is better than No Bread; and (4) that the Aim of Art is to Conceal Disappointment.

Geo. T. Lanigan.

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HENRY CUYLER BUNNER

BEHOLD THE DEEDS!

(Chant Royal)

I WOULD that all men my hard case might know;
How grievously I suffer for no sin:
I, Adolphe Culpepper Furguson, for lo!
I, of my landlady, am locked in,
For being short on this sad Saturday,
Nor having shekels of silver wherewith to pay;
She has turned and is departed with my key;
Wherefore, not even as other boarders free,
I sing (as prisoners to their dungeon stones
When for ten days they expiate a spree):
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

One night and one day have I wept my woe;
Nor wot I when the morrow doth begin,
If I shall have to write to Briggs & Co.,
To pray them to advance the requisite tin
For ransom of their salesman, that he may
Go forth as other boarders go alway—
As those I hear now flocking from their tea,
Led by the daughter of my landlady
Pianoward. This day for all my moans,
Dry bread and water have been servèd me.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Miss Amabel Jones is musical, and so
The heart of the young he-boarder doth **win,**
Playing "The Maiden's Prayer," *adagio*—
That fetcheth him, as fetcheth the banco **skin**
The innocent rustic. For my part, I pray:
That Badarjewska maid may wait for aye
Ere sits she with a lover, as did we
Once sit together, Amabel! Can it be
That all that arduous wooing not atones
For Saturday shortness of trade dollars three?
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones'

Yea! she forgets the arm was wont to go
Around her waist. She wears a buckle whose pin
Galleth the crook of the young man's elbow;
I forget not, for I that youth have been.
Smith was aforetime the Lothario gay.
Yet once, I mind me, Smith was forced to stay
Close in his room. Not calm, as I, was he;
But his noise brought no pleasaunce, verily.
Small ease he gat of playing on the bones,
Or hammering on his stovepipe, that I see.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Thou, for whose fear the figurative crow
I eat, accursed be thou and all thy kin!
Thee will I show up—yea, up will I show
Thy too thick buckwheats, and thy tea too thin.
Ay! here I dare thee, ready for the fray!
Thou dost *not* "keep a first-class house," I say!
It does not with the advertisements agree.

Thou lodgest a Briton with a puggaree,
And thou hast harbored Jacobses and Cohns,
Also a Mulligan. Thus denounce I thee!
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Envoy

Boarders! the worst I have not told to ye:
She hath stolen my trousers, that I may not flee
Privily by the window. Hence these groans,
There is no fleeing in a *robe de nuit.*
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

Secretary Chase was not originally a profane man. He learned how to swear after he went into Lincoln's Cabinet. One day, after he had delivered himself vigorously, Lincoln said to him:

"Mr. Chase, are you an Episcopalian?"

"Why do you ask?" was the somewhat surprised counter-question.

"Oh, just out of curiosity," replied Lincoln. "Seward is an Episcopalian, and I had noticed that you and he swore in much the same manner."

Family Physician: "Well, I congratulate you."

Patient (excitedly): "I will recover?"

Family Physician: "Not exactly, but—well, after consultation, we find that your disease is entirely novel, and if the autopsy should demonstrate that fact we have decided to name it after you."

AN INSURANCE AGENT'S STORY

"Oh, I guess we have our experiences," laughed the fire insurance agent. "We are just like others who have to deal with all kinds of people.

"Take the smart Alecs, for instance. They give us a whirl once in a while, but we generally manage to get as good as a draw with them. It was only last fall that one of them came in and wanted me to insure his coal pile. Of course I caught on at once, but I made out his policy and took his money. In the spring he came around with a broad grin on his face and told me that the coal had been burned—in the furnace, of course. I solemnly informed him that we must decline to settle the loss. He said he would sue. I told him to blaze away, and I would have him arrested as an incendiary. That straightened his face out, and it cost him a tidy little supper for a dozen of us just to insure our silence.

"One shrewd old chap had grown rich out of our company, and when he had built an elegant new store and stocked it with goods he came to us again for insurance. I refused him, but he was persistent, and I finally assented on condition that he hang a gross of hand-grenades in the place. After I had seen them properly distributed, I sent an old chum of his up to get

the real lay of the land, for I was still suspicious This is what the cronies said to each other:

"'What is them things, Ike?'

"'Hand grenades.'

"'What's hand-grenades?'

"'I don't know what was in 'em at first, but they're full of kerosene oil now.'

"We canceled the policy."

A girl from town is staying with some country cousins who live at a farm. On the night of her arrival, she finds, to her mortification, that she is ignorant of all sorts of things connected with farm life which to her country cousins are matters of every-day knowledge. She fancies they seem amused at her ignorance.

At breakfast the following morning she sees on the table a dish of fine honey, whereupon she thinks she has found an opportunity of retrieving her humiliating experience of the night before, and of showing her country cousins that she knows something of country life after all. So, looking at the dish of honey she says carelessly:

"Ah, I see you keep a bee."

Minister (at baptismal font): "Name, please!"

Mother (baby born abroad): "Philip Ferdinand Chesterfield Randolph y Livingstone."

Minister (aside to assistant): "Mr. Kneeler, a little more water, please."

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN

A RHYME FOR PRISCILLA

Dear Priscilla, quaint and very
  Like a modern Puritan,
Is a modest, literary,
  Merry young American:
Horace she has read, and Bion
  Is her favorite in Greek;
Shakespeare is a mighty lion
  In whose den she dares but peek;
Him she leaves to some sage Daniel,
  Since of lions she's afraid—
She prefers a playful spaniel,
  Such as Herrick or as Praed,
And it's not a bit satiric
  To confess her fancy goes
From the epic to a lyric
  On a rose.

Wise Priscilla, dilettante,
  With a sentimental mind,
Doesn't deign to dip in Dante,
  And to Milton isn't kind;
L'Allegro, Il Penseroso
  Have some merits she will grant.
All the rest is only so-so—
  Enter Paradise she can't!

A Rhyme for Priscilla

She might make a charming angel
(And she will if she is good),
But it's doubtful if the change'll
Make the Epic understood:
Honeysuckling, like a bee she
Goes and pillages his sweets,
And it's plain enough to see she
Worships Keats.

Gay Priscilla—just the person
For the Locker whom she loves;
What a captivating verse on
Her neat-fitting gowns or gloves
He could write in catching measure,
Setting all the heart astir!
And to Aldrich what a pleasure
It would be to sing of her—
He, whose perfect songs have won her
Lips to quote them day by day.
She repeats the rhymes of Bunner
In a fascinating way,
And you'll often find her lost in—
She has reveries at times—
Some delightful one of Austin
Dobson's rhymes.

O Priscilla, sweet Priscilla,
Writing of you makes me think,
As I burn my brown Manila
And immortalize my ink,
How well satisfied these poets
Ought to be with what they do,

When, especially, they know it's
Read by such a girl as you:
I who sing of you would marry
Just the kind of girl you are—
One who doesn't care to carry
Her poetic taste too far—
One whose fancy is a bright one,
Who is fond of poems fine,
And appreciates a light one
Such as mine.

As the car reached Westville, an old man with a long white beard rose feebly from a corner seat and tottered toward the door. He was, however, stopped by the conductor, who said:

"Your fare, please."

"I paid my fare."

"When? I don't remember it."

"Why, I paid you when I got on the car."

"Where did you get on?"

"At Fair Haven."

"That won't do! When I left Fair Haven there was only a little boy on the car."

"Yes," answered the old man, "I know it. I was that little boy."

AN EPITAPH

Here lies the body of Susan Lowder
Who burst while drinking Seidlitz powder.
Called from this world to her heavenly rest,
She should have waited till it effervesced.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

A RIVERMOUTH ROMANCE

At five o'clock of the morning of the tenth of July, 1860, the front door of a certain house on Anchor Street, in the ancient seaport town of Rivermouth, might have been observed to open with great caution. This door, as the least imaginative reader may easily conjecture, did not open itself. It was opened by Miss Margaret Callaghan, who immediately closed it softly behind her, paused for a few seconds with an embarrassed air on the stone step, and then, throwing a furtive glance up at the second-story windows, passed hastily down the street toward the river, keeping close to the fences and garden walls on her left.

There was a ghostlike stealthiness to Miss Margaret's movements, though there was nothing whatever of the ghost about Miss Margaret herself. She was a plump, short person, no longer young, with coal-black hair growing low on the forehead, and a round face that would have been nearly meaningless if the features had not been emphasized—italicized, so to speak, —by the smallpox. Moreover, the brilliancy of her toilet would have rendered any ghostly hypothesis untenable. Mrs. Solomon (we refer to the

dressiest Mrs. Solomon, whichever one that was) in all her glory was not arrayed like Miss Margaret on that eventful summer morning. She wore a light-green, shot-silk frock, a blazing red shawl, and a yellow crape bonnet profusely decorated with azure, orange and magenta artificial flowers. In her hand she carried a white parasol. The newly risen sun, ricochetting from the bosom of the river and striking point-blank on the top-knot of Miss Margaret's gorgeousness, made her an imposing spectacle in the quiet street of that Puritan village. But, in spite of the bravery of her apparel, she stole guiltily along by garden walls and fences, until she reached a small, dingy frame house near the wharves, in the darkened doorway of which she quenched her burning splendor, if so bold a figure is permissible.

Three-quarters of an hour passed. The sunshine moved slowly up Anchor Street, fingered noiselessly the well-kept brass knockers on either side, and drained the heeltaps of dew which had been left from the revels of the fairies overnight in the cups of the morning-glories. Not a soul was stirring yet in this part of the town, though the Rivermouthians are such early birds that not a worm may be said to escape them. By and by one of the brown Holland shades at one of the upper windows of the Bilkins Mansion—the house from which Miss Margaret had emerged—was drawn up, and old Mr. Bilkins in spiral nightcap looked out on the sunny street. Not a living creature was to be seen save the dissipated

family cat—a very Lovelace of a cat that was not allowed a night-key—who was sitting on the curbstone opposite, waiting for the hall door to open. Three-quarters of an hour, we repeat, had passed, when Mrs. Margaret O'Rourke, *née* Callaghan, issued from the small, dingy house by the river and regained the doorstep of the Bilkins Mansion in the same stealthy fashion in which she had left it.

Not to prolong a mystery that must already oppress the reader, Mr. Bilkins's cook had, after the manner of her kind, stolen out of the premises before the family were up and got herself married—surreptitiously and artfully married—as if matrimony were an indictable offense.

And something of an offense it was in this instance. In the first place, Margaret Callaghan had lived nearly twenty years with the Bilkins family, and the old people—there were no children now—had rewarded this long service by taking Margaret into their affections. It was a piece of subtle ingratitude for her to marry without admitting the worthy couple to her confidence.

In the next place, Margaret had married a man some eighteen years younger than herself. That was the young man's lookout, you say. We hold it was Margaret that was to blame. What does a young blade of twenty-two know? Not half so much as he thinks he does. His exhaustless ignorance at that age is a discovery which is left for him to make in his prime.

"Curly gold locks cover foolish brains,
Billing and cooing is all your cheer;
Sighing and singing of midnight strains,
Under Bonnybell's window panes—
Wait till you come to Forty Year!"

In one sense Margaret's husband *had* come to forty year—she was forty to a day.

Mrs. Margaret O'Rourke, with the baddish cat following closely at her heels, entered the Bilkins mansion, reached her chamber in the attic without being intercepted and there laid aside her finery. Two or three times, while arranging her more humble attire, she paused to take a look at the marriage certificate, which she had deposited between the leaves of her prayer-book, and on each occasion held that potent document upside down; for Margaret's literary culture was of the severest order, and excluded the art of reading.

The breakfast was late that morning. As Mrs. O'Rourke set the coffee-urn in front of Mrs. Bilkins and flanked Mr. Bilkins with the broiled mackerel and buttered toast, Mrs. O'Rourke's conscience smote her. She afterward declared that when she saw the two sitting there so innocent-like, not dreaming of the *comether* she had put upon them, she secretly and unbeknownst let a few tears fall into the cream pitcher. Whether or not it was this material expression of Margaret's penitence that spoiled the coffee does not admit of inquiry: but the coffee was bad. In fact, the whole breakfast was a comedy of errors.

It was a blessed relief to Margaret when the meal was ended. She retired in a cold perspiration to the penetralia of the kitchen, and it was remarked by both Mr. and Mrs. Bilkins that those short flights of vocalism—apropos of the personal charms of one Kate Kearney, who lived on the banks of Killarney—which ordinarily issued from the direction of the scullery, were unheard that forenoon.

The town clock was striking eleven, and the antiquated timepiece on the staircase (which never spoke but it dropped pearls and crystals, like the fairy in the story) was lisping the hour, when there came three tremendous knocks at the street door. Mrs. Bilkins, who was dusting the brass-mounted chronometer in the hall, stood transfixed, with arm uplifted. The admirable old lady had for years been carrying on a guerilla warfare with itinerant venders of furniture polish, and pain-killer and crockery cement, and the like. The effrontery of the triple knock convinced her the enemy was at her gates—possibly that dissolute creature with twenty-four sheets of note-paper and twenty-four envelopes for fifteen cents.

Mrs. Bilkins swept across the hall and opened the door with a jerk. The suddenness of the movement was apparently not anticipated by the person outside, who, with one arm stretched feebly toward the receding knocker, tilted gently forward and rested both hands on the threshold in an attitude which was probably common

enough with our ancestors of the Simian period, but could never have been considered graceful. By an effort that testified to the excellent condition of his muscles, the person instantly righted himself, and stood swaying unsteadily on his toes and heels, and smiling rather vaguely on Mrs. Bilkins.

It was a slightly built but well-knitted young fellow, in the not unpicturesque garb of our marine service. His woolen cap, pitched forward at an acute angle with his nose, showed the back part of a head thatched with short yellow hair, which had broken into innumerable curls of painful tightness. On his ruddy cheeks a sparse, sandy beard was making a timid debut. Add to this a weak, good-natured mouth, a pair of devil-may-care blue eyes, and the fact that the man was very drunk, and you have a pre-Raphaelite portrait—we may as well say at once—of Mr. Larry O'Rourke of Mullingar, County Westmeath, and late of the United States sloop-of-war *Santee*.

The man was a total stranger to Mrs. Bilkins; but the instant she caught sight of the double white anchors embroidered on the lapels of his jacket, she unhesitatingly threw back the door, which with great presence of mind she had partly closed.

A drunken sailor standing on the step of the Bilkins mansion was no novelty. The street, as we have stated, led down to the wharves, and sailors were constantly passing. The house

abutted directly on the street; the granite doorstep was almost flush with the sidewalk, and the huge old-fashioned brass knocker—seemingly a brazen hand that had been cut off at the wrist, and nailed against the oak as a warning to malefactors—extended itself in a kind of grim appeal to everybody. It seemed to possess strange fascinations for all seafaring folk; and when there was a man-of-war in the port the rat-tat-tat of that knocker would frequently startle the quiet neighborhood long after midnight. There appeared to be an occult understanding between it and the blue-jackets. Years ago there was a young Bilkins, one Pendexter Bilkins—a sad losel, we fear—who ran away to try his fortunes before the mast, and fell overboard in a gale off Hatteras. "Lost at sea," says the chubby marble slab in the Old South Burying Ground, "*ætat* 18." Perhaps that is why no blue-jacket, sober or drunk, was ever repulsed from the door of the Bilkins mansion.

Of course Mrs. Bilkins had her taste in the matter, and preferred them sober. But as this could not always be, she tempered her wind, so to speak, to the shorn lamb. The flushed, prematurely old face that now looked up at her moved the good lady's pity.

"What do you want?" she asked kindly.

"Me wife."

"There's no wife for you here," said Mrs. Bilkins, somewhat taken aback. "His wife!" she thought; "it's a mother the poor boy needs."

"Me wife," repeated Mr. O'Rourke, "for better or for worse."

"You had better go away," said Mrs. Bilkins, bridling up, "or it will be the worse for you."

"To have and to howld," continued Mr. O'Rourke, wandering retrospectively in the mazes of the marriage service, "to have and to howld till death—bad luck to him!—takes one or the ither of us."

"You're a blasphemous creature," said Mrs. Bilkins severely.

"Thim's the words his riverince spake this mornin', standin' foreninst us," explained Mr. O'Rourke. "I stood here, see, and me jew'l stood there, and the howly chaplain beyont."

And Mr. O'Rourke with a wavering forefinger drew a diagram of the interesting situation on the doorstep.

"Well," returned Mrs. Bilkins, "if you're a married man, all I have to say is, there's a pair of fools instead of one. You had better be off; the person you want doesn't live here."

"Bedad, thin, but she does."

"Lives here?"

"Sorra a place else."

"The man's crazy," said Mrs. Bilkins to herself.

While she thought him simply drunk, she was not in the least afraid; but the idea that she was conversing with a madman sent a chill over her. She reached back her hand preparatory to shutting the door, when Mr. O'Rourke, with an

agility that might have been expected from his previous gymnastics, set one foot on the threshold and frustrated the design.

"I want me wife," he said sternly.

Unfortunately, Mr. Bilkins had gone uptown, and there was no one in the house except Margaret, whose pluck was not to be depended on. The case was urgent. With the energy of despair Mrs. Bilkins suddenly placed the toe of her boot against Mr. O'Rourke's invading foot and pushed it away. The effect of this attack was to cause Mr. O'Rourke to describe a complete circle on one leg, and then sit down heavily on the threshold. The lady retreated to the hat-stand, and rested her hand mechanically on the handle of a blue cotton umbrella. Mr. O'Rourke partly turned his head and smiled upon her with conscious superiority. At this juncture a third actor appeared on the scene, evidently a friend of Mr. O'Rourke, for he addressed that gentleman as a "spalpeen," and told him to go home.

"Divil an inch," replied the spalpeen; but he got himself off the threshold and resumed his position on the step.

"It's only Larry, mum," said the man, touching his forelock politely; "as dacent a lad as ever lived, when he's not in liquor; an' I've known him to be sober for days togither," he added, reflectively. "He don't mane a ha'p'orth o' harum, but jist now he's not quite in his right moind."

"I should think not," said Mrs. Bilkins, turn-

ing from the speaker to Mr. O'Rourke, who had seated himself gravely on the scraper and was weeping. "Hasn't the man any friends?"

"Too many of 'em, mum, an' it's along wid dhrinkin' toasts wid 'em that Larry got throwed. The punch that spalpeen has dhrunk this day would amaze ye. He give us the slip awhiles ago, bad cess to him, an' come up here. Didn't I tell ye, Larry, not to be afther ringin' at the owle gintleman's knocker? Ain't ye got no sinse at all?"

"Misther Donnehugh," responded Mr. O'Rourke with great dignity, "ye're dhrunk again."

Mr. Donnehugh, who had not taken more than thirteen ladles of rum punch, disdained to reply directly.

"He's a dacent lad enough"—this to Mrs. Bilkins—"but his head is wake. Whin he's had two sups o' whiskey he belaves he's dhrunk a bar'lful. A gill o' water out of a jimmy-john'd fuddle him, mum."

"Isn't there anybody to look after him?"

"No, mum; he's an orphan. His father and mother live in the owld counthry, an' a fine, hale owld couple they are."

"Hasn't he any family in the town?"

"Sure, mum, he has a family; wasn't he married this blessed mornin'?"

"He said so."

"Indade, thin, he was—the pore divil!"

"And the—the person?" inquired Mrs. Bilkins.

"Is it the wife, ye mane?"

"Yes, the wife; where is she?"

"Well, thin, mum," said Mr. Donnehugh," it's yerself can answer that."

"I?" exclaimed Mrs. Bilkins. "Good heavens! this man's as crazy as the other!"

"Begorra, if anybody's crazy, it's Larry, for it's Larry has married Margaret."

"What Margaret?" cried Mrs. Bilkens.

"Margaret Callaghan, sure."

"*Our* Margaret? Do you mean to say that OUR Margaret has married that—that good-for-nothing, inebriated wretch?"

"It's a civil tongue the owld lady has, anyway," remarked Mr. O'Rourke critically, from the scraper.

Mrs. Bilkins's voice during the latter part of the colloquy had been pitched in a high key; it rung through the hall and penetrated to the kitchen, where Margaret was wiping the breakfast things. She paused with a half-dried saucer in her hand, and listened. In a moment more she stood, with bloodless face and limp figure, leaning against the banister behind Mrs. Bilkins.

"Is it there ye are, me jew'l!" cried Mr. O'Rourke, discovering her.

Mrs. Bilkins wheeled upon Margaret.

"Margaret Callaghan, *is* that thing your husband?"

"Ye-yes, mum," faltered Mrs. O'Rourke, with a woful lack of spirit.

"Then take it away!" cried Mrs. Bilkins.

Margaret, with a slight flush on either cheek, glided past Mrs. Bilkins, and the heavy oak door closed with a bang, as the gates of Paradise must have closed of old upon Adam and Eve.

"Come," said Margaret, taking Mr. O'Rourke by the hand; and the two wandered forth upon their wedding journey down Anchor Street, with all the world before them where to choose. They chose to halt at the small, shabby tenement-house by the river, through the doorway of which the bridal pair disappeared with a reeling, eccentric gait; for Mr. O'Rourke's intoxication seemed to have run down his elbow, and communicated itself to Margaret.

O Hymen! who burnest precious gums and scented woods in thy torch at the melting of aristocratic hearts, with what a pitiful penny-dip thou hast lighted up our little back-street romance.—*Marjorie Daw, and Other Stories.*

The story is told of a famous Boston lawyer, that one day, after having a slight discussion with the judge, he deliberately turned his back upon that personage and started to walk off.

"Are you trying, sir, to show your contempt for the Court?" asked the Judge, sternly.

"No, sir," was the reply; "I am trying to conceal it."

GELETT BURGESS

THE BOHEMIANS OF BOSTON

THE "Orchids" were as tough a crowd
As Boston anywhere allowed;
It was a club of wicked men—
The oldest, twelve, the youngest, ten;
They drank their soda colored green,
They talked of "Art," and "Philistine,"
They wore buff "wescoats," and their hair
It used to make the waiters stare!
They were so shockingly behaved
And Boston thought them *so* depraved,
Policemen, stationed at the door,
Would raid them every hour or more!
They used to smoke (!) and laugh out loud(!)
They were a very devilish crowd!
They formed a Cult, far subtler, brainier
Than ordinary Anglomania,
For all as Jacobites were reckoned,
And gaily toasted Charles the Second!
(What would the Bonnie Charlie say,
If he could see that crowd to-day?)
Fitz-Willieboy McFlubadub,
Was Regent of the Orchids' Club;
A wild Bohemian was he,
And spent his money fast and free.
He thought no more of spending dimes

On some debauch of pickled limes,
Than you would think of spending nickels
To buy a pint of German pickles!
The Boston maiden passed him by
With sidelong glances of her eye,
She dared not speak (he *was* so wild),
Yet worshiped this Lotharian child.
Fitz-Willieboy was so *blasé*,
He burned a *Transcript* up one day!
The Orchids fashioned all their style
On Flubadub's infernal guile.
That awful Boston oath was his—
He used to 'jaculate, "Gee Whiz!"
He showed them that immoral haunt,
The dirty Chinese Restaurant,
And there they'd find him, even when
It got to be as late as ten!
He ate chopped *suey* (with a fork),
You should have heard the villain talk
Of one *reporter* that he knew(!)
An artist, and an actor, too!!!
The Orchids went from bad to worse,
Made epigrams—attempted verse!
Boston was horrified and shocked
To hear the way those Orchids mocked;
For they made fun of Boston ways,
And called good men Provincial Jays!
The end must come to such a story,
Gone is the wicked Orchids' glory,
The room was raided by police,
One night, for breaches of the Peace
(There had been laughter, long and loud,

In Boston this is not allowed),
And there, the sergeant of the squad
Found awful evidence—my God!—
Fitz-Willieboy McFlubadub,
The Regent of the Orchids' Club,
Had written on the window-sill,
This shocking outrage—"Beacon H—ll!"

In "The Burgess Nonsense Book."

Of the countless good stories attributed to Artemus Ward, the best one, perhaps, is one which tells of the advice which he gave to a Southern railroad conductor soon after the war. The road was in a wretched condition, and the trains were consequently run at a phenomenally low rate of speed. When the conductor was punching his ticket, Artemus remarked:

"Does this railroad company allow passengers to give it advice, if they do so in a respectful manner?"

The conductor replied in gruff tones that he guessed so.

"Well," Artemus went on, "it occurred to me that it would be well to detach the cowcatcher from the front of the engine and hitch it to the rear of the train, for you see we are not liable to overtake a cow, but what's to prevent a cow from strolling into this car and biting a passenger?"

MARION COUTHOUY SMITH

THE COMPOSITE GHOST

They were placed on exhibition, in a long, imposing row,
All who'd borne the name of Spriggins for three centuries or so;
From old Amram, who came over in the Pilgrim Fathers' track,
To the late lamented Jane, for whom the family still wore black.
They stood upon a hardwood shelf, in rich and proud array,
Not disposed, I beg to state, in any grim. offensive way.
They were not a row of mummies, standing terrible and tall,
Nor a grisly stack of coffins, piled up high along the wall;
You never came across a skull, nor stumbled on a bone,
Nor a human frame in lattice-work, left rattling there alone;
Your nerves would never suffer there from sudden shocks or "turns"—
There was nothing but a score or two of classic little urns.

Which held their sacred contents, sealed in
elegant reserve,
Like a ghastly kind of jam, or supernatural
preserve.
You never, never would suspect that in those
graceful rows,
The entire Spriggins ancestry could peacefully
repose.
'Tis a plan that's most convenient, thus within a
little space,
To have your relatives condensed, and keep them
in a vase;
For if you care to travel, why, wherever you may
go,
You can simply take your family vault along
with you, you know.
You can have the whole collection sent by
Peterson's express,
To be a genteel solace in bereavement and
distress.
Besides, it is the prettiest end a man could wish
himself—
To be gathered to his forefathers in an urn upon a
shelf.

. . . . . .

There rested all the Spriggins tribe, each in
his little urn,
On which the names and dates were carved, as
each had died in turn;
And Spriggins, *père*, was proud of them, and
often went to weep,

Beside the sacred shelf on which he one day
hoped to sleep.
One fatal afternoon it chanced that Spriggins's
youngest son,
Whose un-Christian age was seven, and whose
Christian name was John,
Obtained the key to that small room, and found
that sacred store
Of the ashes of his fathers, which he ne'er had
seen before.
This Johnny was a clever boy, much given to
research,
His very nose turned up, with interrogatory
perch;
His head—excuse the slang—was very level,
you'll surmise,
But 'twas level where his bump of veneration
ought to rise.
He knew they were his relatives, within those
vases packed,
But he didn't care a button for that interesting
fact;
All he wanted was to reach those curious urns
and take them down.
(Alas! the shelf was several feet above his little
crown.)
There came a sudden avalanche, and flat upon
the floor
He lay, sprinkled with the ashes of a century
or more!
A portion of his grandpa ran in torrents down
his neck,

And 'round him all his great-great aunts were lying by the peck.
He had Pilgrim Fathers in his shoes, all trickling 'round his toes;
He had grandmas in his hair, and he had cousins in his nose.
And, worst of all, a fragment of the late lamented Jane
Had lodged beneath his eyelid, and was causing dreadful pain!
But John had lots of courage, and he didn't stop to cry,
Not even with the ashes of his sister in his eye;
He only gasped, and quickly rose, and ruefully surveyed
The ruin and confusion that his luckless fall had made.
He could sweep up all the ashes, but things never could be fixed,
For the worthy house of Spriggins was inextricably mixed!
Such stirring up would stagger e'en the very stoutest brain;
Why, you couldn't tell old Amram from the late lamented Jane.
The scions of this honored line, all by that little loon,
Might just as well have been stirred up, like pudding, with a spoon.
'Twas very sad; but Johnny, yielding not to thoughts of gloom,

Brought up a chair to stand on, and a dustpan
and a broom,
And soon that little room was very, very cleanly
swept,
And urns and ashes all put back, just where
they had keen kept.
You never, never would suspect what that
one day had cost,
And that in that act each Spriggins's identity
was lost!

. . . . . .

That night, alas! Pa Spriggins, in a solemn
frame of mind,
Betook himself to that small room, as oft he
felt inclined,
And he shut the door, and sat him down, those
urns to contemplate,
While appropriate reflections chased each other
through his pate,
For he loved to pensively recount the treasures
of the past,
And wondered constantly how long the family
would last.
The place was dark and gloomy—he was shut
up there alone,
When suddenly—his hair stood up!—he heard
a hollow groan!
The cover of the largest urn rose up a little
way,
A mist came forth, which altered to a figure
dim and gray.

It rose up from the ashes, like the Phenix
known of old,
But of such an awful bird as this the ancients
never told.
It bore a distant likeness to the figure of a
man,
But picture such a nondescript I know I never
can.
It had a gray old head upon the shoulders of a
child;
One eye was small and wicked, and the other
large and wild.
Its hands, its feet, its teeth, its ears, I solemnly
declare,
You couldn't pick out two of them that matched
to make a pair!
One foot was slim and dainty, and the other
huge and flat,
And it had a woman's wig on underneath a
man's cocked hat;
A waistcoat like George Washington's, a blazer
and a train,
That Spriggins knew had once belonged to his
departed Jane!
He sank upon his bended knees, with terror
quite unmanned;
It stood upon its one large foot, and waved
its biggest hand,
And spake: "Unhappy man," it said, "for
this have we been burned?
For this have we been kept here long, so care-
fully inurned?

Oh, see, upon this sacred shelf what dire confusion reigns!
Wretch! What have you been doing with your ancestors' remains?
You listen to your father's voice, but thanks, I fear, to you,
It is your uncle Solomon whose mouth it's speaking through!
Oh, tell me who or what I am, and how long I've been dead;
And tell me if I've got my own or some one else's head;
I don't belong to any special period at all.
Am I my Aunt Kiziah, or am I your brother Paul?
Oh, Spriggins—Ebenezer J.! Oh, wretch! Oh, fool! Oh, rash!
How could you mix our ashes in one vast, ancestral hash?"
Thus ending, with a mingled wail of misery and rage,
That awful vision ceased to speak, and vanished from the stage,
While ghostly groanings issued from the various urns around,
But poor old Spriggins heard no more—he swooned upon the ground.

. . . . . .

And now these mingled embers 'neath memorial marbles lie,
And Spriggins and his family will be buried when they die.

SOME MESSAGES RECEIVED BY TEACHERS IN BROOKLYN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE fact that the "Slab City" parents object to clay-modeling in the schools is illustrated in the following note sent to a teacher in one of the Tenth Ward schools:

Miss ——: John kem home yesterday wid his clothes covered wid mud. He said you put him to work mixing clay when he ought to be learning to read an' write. Me man carries th' hod, an' God knows I hev enuf trouble wid his clothes in th' wash widout scraping John's coat. If he comes home like this agin I'll send him back ter yez to wash his clothes.

MRS. O'R——

Here is one from a Brownsville mother who objects to physical culture:

Miss Brown: You must stop teach my Lizzie fisical torture she needs yet readin' an' figors mit sums more as that, if I want her to do jumpin' I kin make her jump.

MRS. CANAVOWSKY.

The number of parents who object to the temperance plank in the educational platform

is greater than the number of objectors to any other class of study in Williamsburg. Here is a copy of a note sent to a teacher in the Stagg Street school:

Miss ——: My boy tells me that when I trink beer der overcoat vrom my stummack gets to thick. Please be so kind and don't intervere in my family afairs.

MR. CHRIS ——

Here is a sample on the same subject sent to a teacher in the Maujer Street school:

Dear Teacher: You should mine your own bizniss an' not tell Jake he should not trink bier, so long he lif he trinks the bier an' he trinks it yen wen bill rains is ded, if you interfer some more I go on the bored of edcation.

W. S.

In this school the teachers are often compelled to listen to long arguments on the excise question, and the parents who call around to argue become greatly excited when told that the children are taught not to taste alcoholic liquors. One little boy told his teacher that his mother had given him orders to get up and leave the classroom during the hour for discussing the alcohol question. The teacher told the boy to ask his mother to call around at the schoolhouse. She wrote this note instead:

Teacher: John says you want to see me.

I have a bier saloon and nine children. Bizness is good in morning an' aft'noon. How can I come?

The Pickleville parents as a rule never omit the "obliging" end of a note, as will be seen in the following, sent to a teacher of the Wall Street School:

Dear Teacher: Pleas excus Fritz for staying home he had der meesells to oblige his father.

J. B.

And here is another of the obliging kind:

Teacher: Please excuse Henny for not comeing in school as he died from the car runover on Tuesday. By doing so you will greatly oblige his loving mother.

Here is one sent to the Brownsville school:

Dear Miss Baker: Please excuse Rachael for being away those two days her grandmother died to oblige her mother.

Mrs. Renski.

The child mentioned in the following note was neither German nor Irish. But he is back in school after a battle with the doctors:

Miss ——: Frank could not come these three weeks because he had the amonia and information of the bowels.

Mrs. Smith.

The notes sent are sometimes written on scented paper, and as a rule these are misspelled. Here is a scented-paper sample:

Teacher: You must excuse my girl for not coming to school, she was sick and lade in a common dose state for tree days.

MRS. W.

In this same school a teacher received the following:

Miss ——: Please let Willie home at 2 o'clock. I take him out for a little pleasure to see his grandfather's grave.

MRS. R.

Still another mother wrote the following:

Miss ——: Please be so kind an' knock hell out of Sol when he gives too much lip to oblige his mother.

THE TROUT'S APPEAL

Don't visit the commonplace Winnepesauke,
Or the rivulet Onoquinapaskeasanognog,
Nor climb to the summit of bare Moosilauke,
And look eastward toward the clear Umbagog;
But come into Maine to the Welokennebacock,
Or to the saucy little river Essiqualsagook,
Or still smaller stream of Chinquassabunticook,
Then visit me last on the great Anasaguntic-
cook.

BILL NYE

A FATAL THIRST

From the London *Lancet* we learn that "many years ago a case was recorded by Doctor Otto, of Copenhagen, in which 495 needles passed through the skin of a hysterical girl, who had probably swallowed them during a hysterical paroxysm, but these all emerged from the regions below the diaphragm, and were collected in groups, which gave rise to inflammatory swellings of some size. One of these contained 100 needles. Quite recently Doctor Bigger described before the Society of Surgery of Dublin a case in which more than 300 needles were removed from the body of a woman. It is very remarkable in how few cases the needles were the cause of death, and how slight an interference with function their presence and movement cause."

It would seem, from the cases on record, that needles in the system rather assist in the digestion and promote longevity.

For instance, we will suppose that the hysterical girl above alluded to, with 495 needles in her stomach, should absorb the midsummer cucumber. Think how interesting those needles would make it for the great colic promoter!

We can imagine the cheerful smile of the cucumber as it enters the stomach, and, bowing cheerfully to the follicles standing around, hangs its hat upon the walls of the stomach, stands its umbrella in a corner, and proceeds to get in its work.

All at once the cucumber looks surprised and grieved about something. It stops in its heaven-born colic generation, and pulls a rusty needle out of its person. Maddened by the pain, it once more attacks the digestive apparatus, and once more accumulates a choice job lot of needles.

Again and again it enters into the unequal contest, each time losing ground and gaining ground, till the poor cucumber, with assorted hardware sticking out in all directions, like the hair on a cat's tail, at last curls up like a caterpillar and yields up the victory.

Still, this needle business will be expensive to husbands, if wives once acquire the habit and allow it to obtain the mastery over them. If a wife once permits this demon appetite for cambric needles to get control of the house, it will soon secure a majority in the senate, and then there will be trouble.

The woman who once begins to tamper with cambric needles is not safe. She may think that she has power to control her appetite, but it is only a step to the maddening thirst for the darning-needle, and perhaps to the button-hook and carpet-stretcher.

It is safer and better to crush the first desire for needles than to undertake when it is too late reformation from the abject slavery to this hellish thirst.

We once knew a sweet young creature, with dewy eye and breath like timothy hay. Her merry laugh rippled out upon the summer air like the joyful music of baldheaded bobolinks.

Everybody loved her, and she loved everybody too. But in a thoughtless moment she swallowed a cambric needle. This did not satisfy her. The cruel thraldom had begun. Whenever she felt depressed and gloomy, there was nothing that would kill her ennui and melancholy but the fatal needle-cushion.

From this she rapidly became more reckless, till there was hardly an hour that she was not under the influence of needles.

If she couldn't get needles to assuage her mad thirst, she would take hairpins or door-keys. She gradually pined away to a mere skeleton. She could no longer sit on one foot and be happy.

Life for her was filled with opaque gloom and sadness. At last she took an overdose of sheep-shears and monkey-wrenches one day, and on the following morning her soul had lit out for the land of eternal summer.

We should learn from this to shun the maddening needle-cushion as we would a viper, and never tell a lie.

GEORGE W. PECK

PECK'S BAD BOY

"SAY, are you a Mason, or a Nodfellow, or anything?" asked the bad boy of the grocery man, as he went to the cinnamon bag on the shelf and took out a long stick of cinnamon bark to chew.

"Why, yes, of course I am; but what set you to thinking of that?" asked the grocery man, as he went to the desk and charged the boy's father with a half-pound of cinnamon.

"Well, do the goats bunt when you nishiate a fresh candidate?"

"No, of course not. The goats are cheap ones, that have no life, and we muzzle them, and put pillows over their heads so they can't hurt anybody," said the grocery man, as he winked at a brother Oddfellow who was seated on a sugar barrel, looking mysterious. "But why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothin', only I wish me and my chum had muzzled our goat with a pillow. Pa would have enjoyed his becoming a member of our lodge better. You see, Pa had been telling us how much good the Masons and Oddfellers did, and said we ought to try and grow up good so we could jine the lodges when we got big;

and I asked Pa if it would do any hurt for us to have a play lodge in my room, and purtend to nishiate, and Pa said it wouldn't do any hurt. He said it would improve our minds and learn us to be men. So my chum and me borried a goat that lives in a livery stable. Say, did you know they keep a goat in a livery stable so the horses won't get sick? They get used to the smell of the goat, and after that nothing can make them sick but a glue factory. You see, my chum and me had to carry the goat up to my room when Ma and Pa was out riding, and he blatted so he had to tie a handkerchief around his nose, and his feet made such a noise on the floor that we put some baby's socks on his hoofs.

"Well, my chum and me practised with that goat until he could bunt the picture of a goat every time. We borried a bock-beer sign from a saloon man and hung it on the back of a chair, and the goat would hit it every time. That night Pa wanted to know what we were doing up in my room, and I told him we were playing lodge, and improving our minds; and Pa said that was right, there was nothing that did boys of our age half so much good as to imitate men, and store by useful nollidge. Then my chum asked Pa if he didn't want to come up and take the grand bumper degree, and Pa laffed and said he didn't care if he did, just to encourage us boys in innocent pastime that was so improving to our intellex. We had shut the goat

up in a closet in my room, and he had got over blatting; so we took off the handkerchief and he was eating some of my paper collars and skate straps. We went upstairs and told Pa to come up pretty soon and give three distinct raps, and when we asked him who comes there he must say, 'A Pilgrim, who wants to join your ancient order and ride the goat.' Ma wanted to come up, too, but we told her if she come in it would break up the lodge, 'cause a woman couldn't keep a secret, and we didn't have any side-saddle for the goat. Say, if you never tried it, the next time you nishiate a man in your Mason's lodge you sprinkle a little kyan pepper on the goat's beard just before you turn him loose. You can get three times as much fun to the square inch of goat.. You wouldn't think it was the same goat. Well, we got all fixed, and Pa rapped, and we let him in and told him he must be blindfolded, and he got on his knees a-laffing, and I tied a towel around his eyes, and then I turned him around and made him get down on his hands also, and then his back was right toward the closet door, and I put the bock-beer sign right against Pa's clothes. He was a-laffing all the time, and said we boys were as full of fun as they made 'em, and we told him it was a solemn occasion, and we wouldn't permit no levity, and if he didn't stop laffing we couldn't give him the grand bumper degree. Then everything was ready, and my chum had his hand on the closet door, and

some kyan pepper in his other hand, and I asked Pa in low bass tones if he felt as though he wanted to turn back, or if he had nerve enough to go ahead and take the degree. I warned him that it was full of dangers, as the goat was loaded for bear, and told him he yet had time to retrace his steps if he wanted to. He said he wanted the whole bizness, and we could go ahead with the menagerie. Then I said to Pa that if he had decided to go ahead, and not blame us for the consequences, to repeat after me the following, 'Bring forth the Royal Bumper and let him Bump.'

"Pa repeated the words, and my chum sprinkled the kyan pepper on the goat's mustache, and he sneezed once and looked sassy, and then he see the lager-beer goat rearing up, and he started for it just like a crow-catcher, and blatted. Pa is real fat, but he knew he got hit, and he grunted and said, 'What you boys doin'?' and then the goat gave him another degree, and Pa pulled off the towel and got up and started for the stairs, and so did the goat; and Ma was at the bottom of the stairs listening, and when I looked over the banister Pa and Ma and the goat were all in a heap, and Pa was yelling murder, and Ma was screaming fire, and the goat was blatting, and sneezing, and bunting, and the hired girl came into the hall and the goat took after her, and she crossed herself just as the goat struck her and said, 'Howly mother, protect me!' and went down-

stairs the way we boys slide down hill, with both hands on herself, and the goat reared up and blatted, and Pa and Ma went into their room and shut the door, and then my chum and me opened the front door and drove the goat out. The minister, who comes to see Ma every three times a week, was just ringing the bell, and the goat thought he wanted to be nishiated, too, and gave him one for luck, and then went down the sidewalk, blatting, and sneezing, and the minister came in the parlor and said he was stabbed, and then Pa came out of his room with his suspenders hanging down, and he didn't know the minister was there, and he said cuss words, and Ma cried and told Pa he would go to the bad place sure, and Pa said he didn't care, he would kill that kussid goat afore he went, and I told Pa the minister was in the parlor, and he and Ma went down and said the weather was propitious for a revival, and it seemed as though an outpouring of the spirit was about to be vouchsafed, and none of them sot down but Ma, 'cause the goat didn't hit her, and while they were talking relidgin with their mouths, and kussin' the goat inwardly, my chum and me adjourned the lodge, and I went and stayed with him all night, and I haven't been home since. But I don't believe Pa will lick me, 'cause he said he would not hold us responsible for the consequences. He ordered the goat himself, and we filled the order, don't you see? Well, I guess I will go and sneak in the back

way, and find out from the hired girl how the land lays. She won't go back on me, 'cause the goat was not loaded for hired girls. She just happened to get in at the wrong time. Good-by, sir. Remember and give your goat kyan pepper in your lodge."

The average American at home or abroad does not take kindly to anything that would seem to cast the shadow of a shade upon his native land. A story told one evening at the Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church by the Rev. George W. Peck might be cited in illustration. An Englishman was traveling through Italy with an American friend, and in the course of their sojournings each maintained the superiority of his own country. Finally, the grand spectacle of Mount Vesuvius in eruption, throwing its brilliant rays across the Bay of Naples, burst upon their astonished gaze. "Now, look at that," chuckled the Englishman; "you haven't got anything in America that can come anywhere near that." "No," moodily replied the Yankee. "It is true we have not got a Vesuvius, but we have got a waterfall that could put that thing out in less than five minutes."

"Fellow citizens," said the candidate, "I have fought against the Indians. I have often had no bed but the battle-field, and no canopy but the sky. I have marched over frozen ground till every step has been marked with blood."

His story told well, till a dried-up looking voter came to the front.

"Did yer say yer'd fought for the Union?"

"Yes," replied the candidate.

"And agin' the Indians?"

"Yes; many a time."

"And that you had slept on the ground with only the sky for a kiver?"

"Certainly."

"And that your feet bled in marching over the frozen ground?"

"That they did," cried the exultant candidate.

"Then I'll be darned if you hain't done enough for your country. Go home and rest. I'll vote for the other fellow."

Mrs. L—— had often told Mamie, her four-year-old daughter, that she was never alone, because God was always with her. One day Mrs. L—— was called from the room and left Mamie for a longer time than she expected. When she came back she said pityingly: "Why, Mamie, have you been here alone all the time? I thought some one would come in." "Oh, I haven't been alone, mamma," Mamie answered, "because God has been with me; but," she added, gravely, "he's *dretful* poor company."